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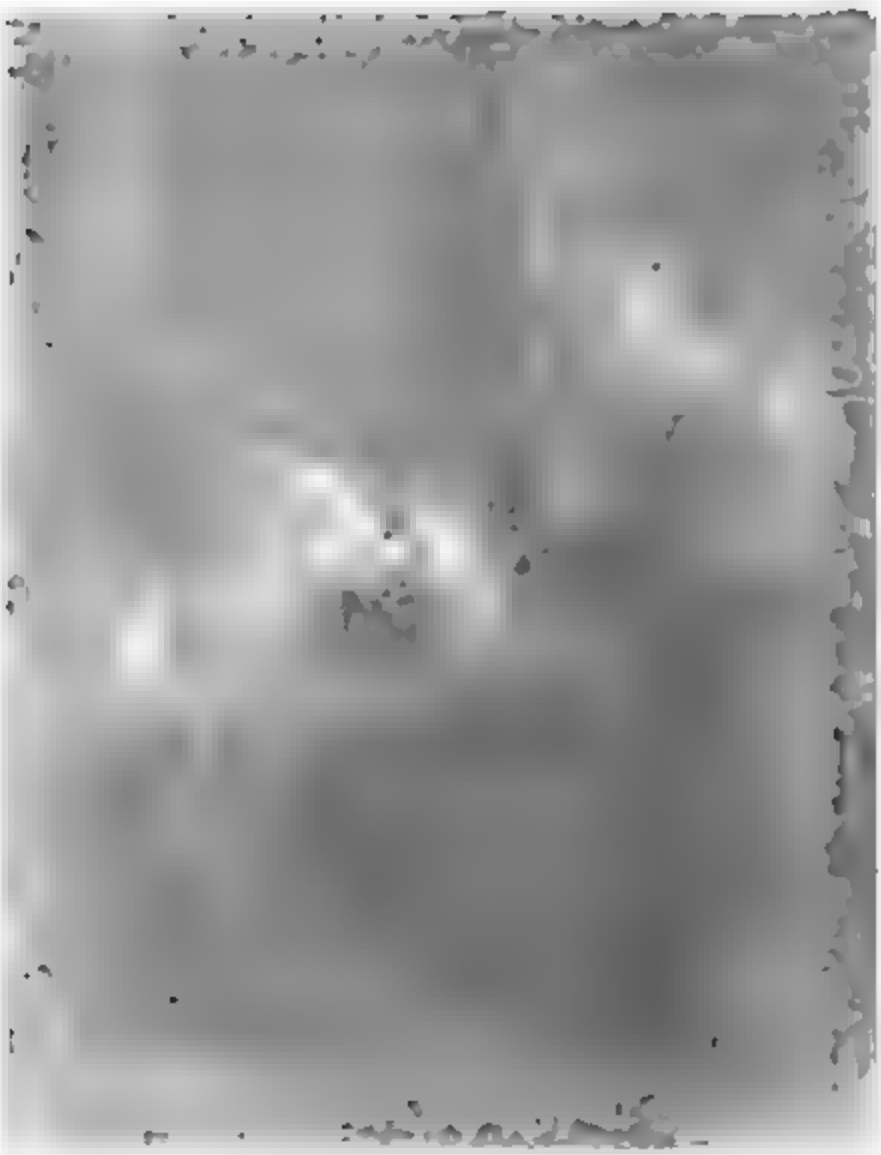

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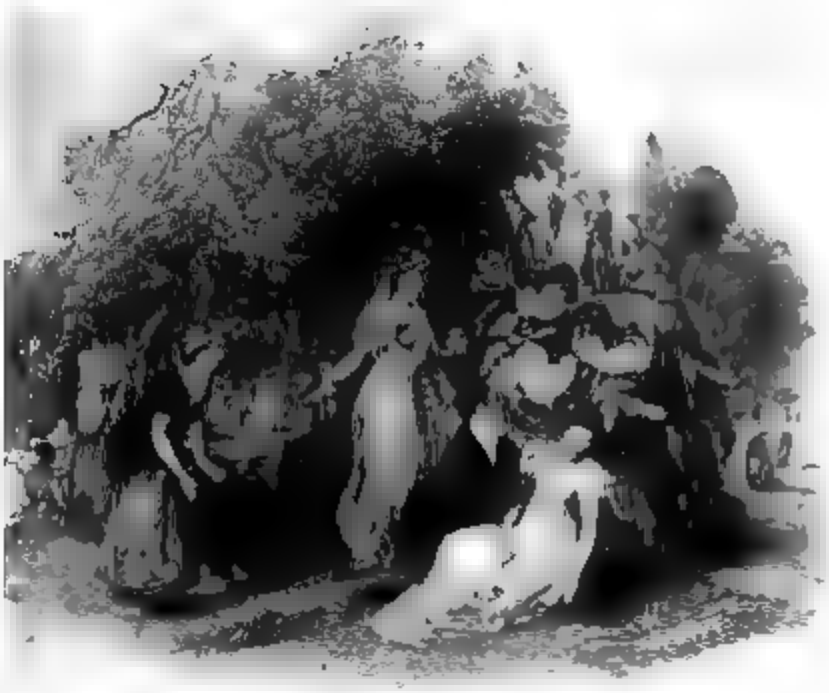
BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.



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TALES AND NOVELS

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

EIGHTEEN VOLUMES BOUND IN NINE.

VOLS. XIII. & XIV.

VOL. XIII.

CONTAINING

LEONORA,

WITH

LETTERS ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

3778

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. & J. HARPER,
NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.
AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT
THE UNITED STATES.

1834.

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LEONORA.

LETTER I.

LADY OLIVIA TO LADY LEONORA L——.

What a misfortune it is to be born a woman! In vain, dear Leonora, would you reconcile me to my doom. Condemned to incessant hypocrisy, or everlasting misery, woman is the slave or the outcast of society. Confidence in our fellow-creatures, or in ourselves, alike forbidden us, to what purpose have we understandings, which we may not use? hearts, which we may not trust? To our unhappy sex genius and sensibility are the most treacherous gifts of Heaven. Why should we cultivate talents merely to gratify the caprice of tyrants? Why seek for knowledge, which can prove only that our wretchedness is irremediable? If a ray of light break in upon us, it is but to make darkness more visible; to show us the narrow limits, the Gothic structure, the impenetrable barriers of our prison. Forgive me if on this subject I cannot speak—if I cannot think—with patience. Is it not fabled, that the gods, to punish some refractory mortal of the male kind, doomed his soul to inhabit upon earth a female form? A punishment more degrading, or more difficult to endure, could scarcely be devised by cruelty omnipotent. What dangers, what sorrows, what persecutions, what nameless evils await the woman who dares to rise above the prejudices of her sex!

"Ah! happy they, the happiest of their kind!"

who, without a struggle, submit their reason to be swathed by all the absurd bandages of custom. What though they cripple or distort their minds; are not

these deformities beauties in the eyes of fashion? and are not these people the favoured nurslings of the *world*, secure of her smiles, her caresses, her fostering praise, her partial protection, through all the dangers of youth and all the dotage of age?

"Ah! happy they, the happiest of their kind!"

who learn to speak, and think, and act by rote; who have a phrase, or a maxim, or a formula ready for every occasion; who follow—

"All the nurse and all the priest have taught."

And is it possible that Olivia can envy these *tideless-blooded* souls their happiness—their apathy? Is her high spirit so broken by adversity? Not such the promise of her early years, not such the language of her unsophisticated heart! Alas! I scarcely know, I scarcely recollect, that proud self, which was wont to defy the voice of opinion, and to set at naught the decrees of prejudice. The events of my life shall be related, or rather the history of my sensations; for in a life like mine sensations become events—a metamorphosis which you will see in every page of my history. I feel an irresistible impulse to open my whole heart to you, my dear Leonora. I ought to be awed by the superiority of your understanding and of your character; yet there is an indulgence in your nature, a softness in your temper, that dissipates fear, and irresistibly attracts confidence.

You have generously refused to be prejudiced against me by busy, malignant rumour; you have resolved to judge of me for yourself. Nothing, then, shall be concealed. In such circumstances I cannot seek to extenuate any of my faults or follies. I am ready to acknowledge them all with self-humiliation more poignant than the sarcasms of my bitterest enemies. But I must pause till I have summoned courage for my confession. Dear Leonora, adieu!

OLIVIA.

LETTER II.

OLIVIA TO LEONORA.

FULL of life and spirits, with a heart formed for all the enthusiasm, for all the delicacy of love, I married early, in the fond expectation of meeting a heart suited to my own. Cruelly disappointed, I found—merely a husband. My heart recoiled upon itself; true to my own principles of virtue, I scorned dissimulation. I candidly confessed to my husband that my love was extinguished. I proved to him, alas! too clearly, that we were not born for each other. The attractive moment of illusion was past—never more to return; the repulsive reality remained. The living was chained to the dead, and, by the inexorable tyranny of English laws, that chain, eternally galling to innocence, can be severed only by the desperation of vice.—Divorce, according to our barbarous institutions, cannot be obtained without guilt. Appalled at the thought, I saw no hope but in submission. Yet to submit to live with the man I could not love was, to a mind like mine impossible. My principles and my feelings equally revolted from this legal prostitution. We separated. I sought for balm to my wounded heart in foreign climes.

To the beauties of nature I was ever feelingly alive. Amid the sublime scenes of Switzerland, and on the consecrated borders of her classic lakes, I sometimes forgot myself to happiness. Felicity, how transient! —transient as the day-dreams that played upon my fancy in the bright morning of love. Alas! not all creation's charms could sooth me to repose. I wandered in search of that which change of place cannot afford. There was an aching void in my heart—an indescribable sadness over my spirits. Sometimes I had recourse to books; but how few were in unison with my feelings, or touched the trembling chords of my disordered mind! Commonplace morality I could not endure. History presented nothing but a mass of crimes. Metaphysics promised some relief, and I bewildered myself in their not inelegant labyrinth. But to the bold genius and exquisite pathos of some Ger-

man novelists I hold myself indebted for my largest portion of ideal bliss; for those rapt moments, when sympathy with kindred souls transported me into better worlds, and consigned vulgar realities to oblivion.

I am well aware, my Leonora, that you approve not of these my favourite writers: but yours is the morality of one who has never known sorrow. I also would interdict such cordials to the happy. But would you forbid those to taste felicity in dreams who feel only misery when awake? Would you dash the cup of Lethe from lips to which no other beverage is salubrious or sweet?

By the use of these opiates my soul gradually settled into a sort of pleasing pensive melancholy. Has it not been said, that melancholy is a characteristic of genius? I make no pretensions to genius: but I am persuaded that melancholy is the habitual, perhaps the natural, state of those who have the misfortune to feel with delicacy.

You, my dear Leonora, will class this notion among what you once called my refined errors. Indeed, I must confess, that I see in you an exception so striking as almost to compel me to relinquish my theory. But again let me remind you, that your lot in life has been different from mine. Alas! how different! Why had not I such a friend, such a mother as yours, early to direct my uncertain steps, and to educate me to happiness? I might have been—But no matter what I might have been—. I must tell you what I have been.

Separated from my husband, without a guide, without a friend at the most perilous period of my life, I was left to that most insidious of counsellors—my own heart—my own weak heart. When I was least prepared to resist the impression, it was my misfortune to meet with a man of a soul congenial to my own. Before I felt my danger, I was entangled beyond the possibility of escape. The net was thrown over my heart; its struggles were to no purpose but to exhaust my strength. Virtue commanded me to be miserable—and I was miserable. But do I dare to expect your pity, Leonora, for such an attachment? It excites your indignation, perhaps your horror. Blame, despise, detest me: all this would I rather bear than deceive you into fancying me better than I really am.

Do not, however, think me worse. If my views had been less pure, if I had felt less reliance on the firmness of my own principles, and less repugnance to artifice, I might easily have avoided some appearances which have injured me in the eyes of the world. With real contrition I confess, that a fatal mixture of masculine independence of spirit, and of female tenderness of heart, has betrayed me into many imprudences; but of vice, and of that meanest species of vice, hypocrisy, I thank Heaven, my conscience can acquit me. All I have now to hope is, that you, my indulgent, my generous Leonora, will not utterly condemn me. Truth and gratitude are my only claims to your friendship—to a friendship which would be to me the first of earthly blessings, which might make me amends for all I have lost. Consider this before, unworthy as I am, you reject me from your esteem. Counsel, guide, save me! Without vanity, but with confidence, I say it, I have a heart that will repay you for affection. You will find me easily moved, easily governed by kindness. Yours has already sunk deep into my soul, and your power is unlimited over the affections and over the understanding of

Your obliged
OLIVIA.

LETTER III.

FROM LADY LEONORA L—— TO HER MOTHER, THE DUCHESS OF ——, ENCLOSING THE PRECEDING LETTERS.

I AM permitted to send you, my dear mother, the enclosed letters. Mixed with what you may not approve, you will, I think, find in them proofs of an affectionate heart and superior abilities. Lady Olivia is just returned to England. Scandal, imported from the Continent, has had such an effect in prejudicing many of her former friends and acquaintance against her, that she is in danger of being excluded from that society of which she was once the ornament and the favourite; but I am determined to support her cause, and to do every thing in my power to counteract the effects of malignity. I cannot sufficiently express the indignation that I feel against the mischievous spirit of scan-

dal, which destroys happiness at every breath, and which delights in the meanest of all malignant feelings —the triumph over the errors of superior characters. Olivia has been much blamed, because she has been much envied.

Indeed, my dear mother, you have been prejudiced against her by false reports. Do not imagine that her fascinating manners have blinded my judgment: I assure you that I have discerned, or rather that she has revealed to me, all her faults: and ought not this candour to make a strong impression upon my mind in her favour? Consider how young, how beautiful she was at her first entrance into fashionable life; how much exposed to temptation, surrounded by flatterers, and without a single friend. I am persuaded that she would have escaped all censure, and would have avoided all the errors with which she now reproaches herself, if she had been blessed with a mother such as mine.

LEONORA L——.

LETTER IV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

MY DEAREST CHILD,

I MUST answer your last before I sleep—before I can sleep in peace. I have just finished reading the rhapsody which it enclosed; and while my mind is full and warm upon the subject, let me write, for I can write to my own satisfaction at no other time. I admire and love you, my child, for the generous indignation you express against those who trample upon the fallen, or who meanly triumph over the errors of superior genius; and if I seem more cold or more severe than you wish me to be, attribute this to my anxiety for your happiness, and to that caution which is perhaps the infirmity of age.

In the course of my long life I have, alas! seen vice and folly dressed in so many different fashions, that I can find no difficulty in detecting them under any disguise; but your unpractised eyes are almost as easily deceived as when you were five years old, and when you could not believe that your pasteboard nun was the same person in her various changes of attire.

Nothing would tempt you to associate with those who have avowed themselves regardless of right and wrong; but I must warn you against another, and a far more dangerous class, who, professing the most refined delicacy of sentiment, and boasting of invulnerable virtue, exhibit themselves in the most improper and hazardous situations; and who, because they are without fear, expect to be deemed free from reproach. Either from miraculous good fortune, or from a singularity of temper, these adventurous heroines may possibly escape with what they call perfect innocence. So much the worse for society. Their example tempts others, who fall a sacrifice to their weakness and folly. I would punish the tempters in this case more than the victims, and for them the most effectual species of punishment is contempt. Neglect is death to these female lovers of notoriety. The moment they are out of fashion their power to work mischief ceases. Those who from their character and rank have influence over public opinion are bound to consider these things in the choice of their associates. This is peculiarly necessary in days when attempts are made to level all distinctions. You have sometimes hinted to me, my dear daughter, with all proper delicacy, that I am too strict in my notions, and that, unknown to myself, my pride mixes with morality. Be it so: the pride of family, and the pride of virtue, should reciprocally support each other. Were I asked what I think the best guard to a nobility in this or in any other country, I should answer, VIRTUE. I admire that simple epitaph in Westminster Abbey on the Duchess of Newcastle:—"Her name was Margaret Lucas, youngest sister to the Lord Lucas of Colchester; a noble family, for all the brothers were valiant, and all the sisters virtuous."

I look to the temper of the times in forming rules for conduct. Of late years we have seen wonderful changes in female manners. I may be like the old marquis in Gil Blas, who contended that even the peaches of modern days had deteriorated; but I fear that my complaints of the degeneracy of human kind are better founded than his fears for the vegetable creation. A taste for the elegant profligacy of French gallantry was, I remember, introduced into this country before the destruction of the French monarchy. Since that time, some sentimental writers and pretended philosophers

of our own and foreign countries have endeavoured to confound all our ideas of morality. To every rule of right they have found exceptions, and on these they have fixed the public attention by adorning them with all the splendid decorations of eloquence; so that the rule is despised or forgotten, and the exception triumphantly established in its stead. These orators seem as if they had been employed by Satan to plead the cause of vice; and, as if possessed by the evil spirit, they speak with a vehemence which carries away their auditors, or with a subtlety which deludes their better judgment. They put extreme cases, in which virtue may become vice, or vice virtue: they exhibit criminal passions in constant connexion with the most exalted, the most amiable virtues; thus, making use of the best feelings of human nature for the worst purposes, they engage pity or admiration perpetually on the side of guilt. Eternally talking of philosophy and philanthropy, they borrow the terms only to perplex the ignorant and seduce the imagination. They have their systems and their theories, and in theory they pretend that the general good of society is their sole immutable rule of morality, and in practice they make the variable feelings of each individual the judges of this general good. Their systems disdain all the vulgar virtues, intent upon some *beau ideal* of perfection or perfectibility. They set common sense and common honesty at defiance. No matter: their doctrine, so convenient to the passions and soporific to the conscience, can never want partisans; especially by weak and enthusiastic women it is adopted and propagated with eagerness; then they become personages of importance, and zealots in support of their sublime opinions; and they can read,—and they can write,—and they can talk,—and they can *effect a revolution in public opinion!* I am afraid, indeed, that they can; for of late years we have heard more of sentiment than of principles; more of the rights of woman than of her duties. We have seen talents disgraced by the conduct of their possessors, and perverted in the vain attempt to defend what is unjustifiable.

Where must all this end? Where the abuse of reason inevitably ends—in the ultimate law of force. If in this age of reason women make a bad use of that power which they have obtained by the cultivation of their understanding, they will degrade and enslave themselves

beyond redemption; they will reduce their sex to a situation worse than it ever experienced even in the ages of ignorance and superstition. If men find that the virtue of women diminishes in proportion as intellectual cultivation increases, they will connect, fatally for the freedom and happiness of our sex, the ideas of female ignorance and female innocence; they will decide that one is the effect of the other. They will not pause to distinguish between the use and the abuse of reason; they will not stand by to see further experiments tried at their expense, but they will prohibit knowledge altogether as a pernicious commodity, and will exert the superior power which nature and society place in their hands, to enforce their decrees. Opinion obtained freedom for women; by opinion they may be again enslaved. It is therefore the interest of the female world, and of society, that women should be deterred by the dread of shame from passing the bounds of discretion. No false lenity, no partiality in favour of amusing talents or agreeable manners, should admit of exceptions which become dangerous examples of impunity. The rank and superior understanding of a *delinquent* ought not to be considered in mitigation, but as aggravating circumstances. Rank makes ill conduct more conspicuous: talents make it more dangerous. Women of abilities, if they err, usually employ all their powers to justify, rather than to amend, their faults.

I am afraid, my dear daughter, that my general arguments are closing round your Olivia; but I must bid you a good night, for my poor eyes will serve me no longer. God bless you, my dear child.

———.

LETTER V.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

I AGREE with you, my dear mother, that in these times especially, it is incumbent upon all persons whose rank or reputation may influence public opinion to be particularly careful to support the cause of female honour, of virtue, and religion. With the same object in view, we may however differ in the choice of means for its attainment. Pleasure as well as pain acts upon human creatures; and therefore, in governing them, may not reward

be full as efficacious as punishment? Our sex are sufficiently apprized of the fatal consequences of ill conduct; the advantages of well-earned reputation should be at least as great, as certain, and as permanent.

In former times, a single finger pointed at the scutcheon of a knight challenged him to defend his fame; but the defiance was open, the defence was public; and if the charge proved groundless, it injured none but the malicious accuser. In our days, female reputation, which is of a nature more delicate than the honour of any knight, may be destroyed by the finger of private malice. The whisper of secret scandal, which admits of no fair or public answer, is too often sufficient to dishonour a life of spotless fame. This is the height, not only of injustice, but of impolicy. Women will become indifferent to reputation, which it is so difficult, even by the prudence of years, to acquire, and which it is so easy to lose in a moment, by the malice or thoughtlessness of those who invent or who repeat scandal. Those who call themselves the world often judge without listening to evidence, and proceed upon suspicion with as much promptitude and severity as if they had the most convincing proofs. But because Cæsar, nearly two thousand years ago, said, that his wife ought not even to be suspected, and divorced her upon the strength of this sentiment, shall we make it a general maxim, that suspicion justifies punishment? We might as well applaud those who, when their friends are barely suspected to be tainted with the plague, drive them from all human comfort and assistance.

Even where women, from the thoughtless gayety of youth, or the impulse of inexperienced enthusiasm, may have given some slight cause for censure, I would not have virtue put on all her gorgon terrors, nor appear circled by the vengeful band of prudes; her chastening hand will be more beneficially felt if she wear her more benign form. To place the imprudent in the same class with the vicious is injustice and impolicy; were the same punishment and the same disgrace to be affixed to small and to great offences, the number of *capital* offenders would certainly increase. Those who were disposed to yield to their passions would, when they had once failed in exact decorum, see no motive, no fear to restrain them; and there would be no pause, no interval between error and profligacy. Among females who

have been imprudent, there are many things to be considered which ought to recommend them to mercy. The judge, when he is obliged to pronounce the immutable sentence of the law, often, with tears, wishes that it were in his power to mitigate the punishment: the decisions of opinion may and must vary with circumstances, else the degree of reprobation which they inflict cannot be proportioned to the offence, or calculated for the good of society. Among the mitigating circumstances I should be inclined to name even those which you bring in aggravation. Talents, and what is called genius, in our sex are often connected with a warmth of heart, an enthusiasm of temper, which expose to dangers from which the coldness of mediocrity is safe. In the illuminated palace of ice, the lights which render the spectacle splendid, and which raise the admiration of the beholders, endanger the fabric and tend to its destruction.

But you will tell me, dear mother, that allusion is not argument—and I am almost afraid to proceed, lest you should think me an advocate for vice. I would not shut the gates of mercy, inexorably and indiscriminately, upon all those of my own sex who have even been *more than imprudent.*

> "He taught them shame, the sudden sense of ill—
> Shame, Nature's hasty conscience, which forbids
> Weak inclination ere it grows to will
> Or stays rash will before it grows to deeds."

While a woman is alive to shame, she cannot be dead to virtue. But by injudicious or incessant reproach, this principle, even where it is most exquisite, may be most easily destroyed. The mimosa, when too long exposed to each rude touch, loses its retractile sensibility. It ought surely to be the care of the wise and benevolent to cherish that principle, implanted in our nature as the guard of virtue, that principle upon which legislators rest the force of punishment, and all the grand interests of society.

My dear mother, perhaps you will be surprised at the style in which I have been writing, and you will smile at hearing your Leonora discuss the duties of legislators, and the grand interests of society. She has not done so from presumption, or from affectation. She was alarmed by your supposing that her judgment was deluded by

fascinating manners, and she determined to produce *general* arguments, to convince you that she is not actuated by particular prepossession. You see that I have at least some show of reason on *my* side. I have forborne to mention Olivia's name: but now that I have obviated, I hope by reasoning, the imputation of partiality, I may observe that all my arguments are strongly in her favour. She had been attacked by slander; *the world* has condemned her upon suspicion merely. She has been imprudent; but I repeat, in the strongest terms, that I am *convinced of her innocence;* and that I should bitterly regret that a woman with such an affectionate heart, such uncommon candour, and such superior abilities, should be lost to society.

Tell me, my dear mother, that you are no longer in anxiety about the consequences of my attachment to Olivia.

Your affectionate daughter
LEONORA.

LETTER VI.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

You lament, my dear child, that such an affectionate heart, such great abilities as Olivia's should be lost to society. Before I sympathize in your pity, my judgment must be convinced that it is reasonable.

What proofs has Lady Olivia given of her affectionate heart? She is at variance with both her parents; she is separated from her husband; and she leaves her child in a foreign country, to be educated by strangers. Am I to understand, that her ladyship's neglecting to perform the duties of a daughter, a wife, and a mother are proofs of an affectionate heart? As to her superior talents, do they contribute to her own happiness, or to the happiness of others? Evidently not to her own; for by her account of herself, she is one of the most miserable wretches alive! She tells you that "*she went to foreign climes in search of balm for a wounded heart, and wandered from place to place, looking for what no place could afford.*" She talks of "*indescribable sadness—an aching void—an impenetrable prison—darkness visible—dead bodies chained to living ones;*" and she exhibits all

the disordered furniture of a "diseased mind." But you say, that though her powers are thus insufficient to make herself happy, they may amuse or instruct the world; and of this I am to judge by the letters which you have sent me. You admire fine writing; so do I. I class eloquence high among the fine arts. But by eloquence I mean something more than Dr. Johnson defines it to be, "the art of speaking with fluency and elegance." This is an art which is now possessed to a certain degree by every boarding-school miss. Every scribbling young lady can now string sentences and sentiments together, and can turn a period harmoniously. Upon the strength of these accomplishments they commence heroines, and claim the privileges of the order; privileges which go to an indefinite and most alarming extent. Every heroine may have her own code of morality for her private use, and she is to be tried by no other; she may rail as loudly as she pleases "at the barbarous institutions of society," and may deplore "*the inexorable tyranny of the English laws.*" If she find herself involved in delicate entanglements of crossing duties, she may break through any one, or all of them, to extricate herself with a noble contempt of prejudice.

I have promised to reason calmly; but I cannot repress the terror which I feel at the idea of my daughter's becoming the friend of one of these women. Olivia's letters are, I think, in the true heroine style; and they might make a brilliant figure in a certain class of novels. She begins with a bold exclamation on "the misfortune of being born a woman!—*the slave or the outcast of society, condemned to incessant hypocrisy!*" Does she mean modesty? Her manly soul feels it "*the most degrading punishment that omnipotent cruelty could devise, to be imprisoned in a female form.*" From such a masculine spirit some fortitude and magnanimity might be expected; but presently she begs to be pitied, for a broken spirit, and more than female tenderness of heart. I have observed that the ladies who wish to be men are usually those who have not sufficient strength of mind to be women.

Olivia proceeds in an ironical strain to envy, as "*the happiest of their sex, those who submit to be swathed by custom.*" These persons she stigmatizes with the epithet of *tideless-blooded.* It is the common trick of unprincipled women to affect to despise those who conduct

themselves with propriety. Prudence they term *coldness*; fortitude, *insensibility*; and regard to the rights of others, *prejudice*. By this perversion of terms they would laugh or sneer virtue out of countenance; and, by robbing her of all praise, they would deprive her of all immediate motive. Conscious of their own degradation, they would lower every thing and everybody to their own standard: they would make you believe that those who have not yielded to their passions are destitute of sensibility; that the love which is not blazoned forth in glaring colours is not entitled to our sympathy. The sacrifice of the strongest feelings of the human heart to a sense of duty is to be called mean, or absurd; but the shameless phrensy of passion, exposing itself to public gaze, is to be an object of admiration. These heroines talk of strength of mind; but they forget that strength of mind is to be shown in resisting their passions, not in yielding to them. Without being absolutely of an opinion, which I have heard maintained, that all virtue is sacrifice, I am convinced that the essential characteristic of virtue is to bear and forbear. These sentimentalists can do neither. They talk of sacrifices and generosity; but they are the veriest egotists—the most selfish creatures alive.

Open your eyes, my dear Leonora, and see things as they really are. Lady Olivia thinks it a sufficient excuse for abandoning her husband, to say that she found "*his soul was not in unison with hers.*" She thinks it an adequate apology for a criminal attachment, to tell you that "*the net was thrown over her heart before she felt her danger: that all its struggles were to no purpose, but to exhaust her strength.*"

If she did not feel her danger, she prepared it. The course of reading which her ladyship followed was the certain preparation for her consequent conduct. She tells us that she could not endure "*the commonplace of morality, but metaphysics promised her some relief.*" In these days a heroine need not be a moralist, but she must be a metaphysician. She must "*wander in the not inelegant labyrinth;*" and if in the midst of it she comes unawares upon the monster vice, she must not start, though she have no clew to secure her retreat.

From metaphysics Lady Olivia went on to German novels. "*For her largest portions of bliss, for those rapt moments, which consigned vulgar realities to oblivion,*" she

owns herself indebted to those writers who promise an ideal world of pleasure, which, like the *mirage* in the desert, bewilders the feverish imagination. I always suspected the imagination of these *women of feeling* to be more susceptible than their hearts. They want excitation for their morbid sensibility, and they care not at what expense it is procured. If they could make all the pleasures of life into one cordial, they would swallow it at a draught in a fit of sentimental spleen. The mental intemperance that they indulge in promiscuous novel-reading destroys all vigour and clearness of judgment; every thing dances in the varying medium of their imagination. Sophistry passes for reasoning; nothing appears profound but what is obscure; nothing sublime but what is beyond the reach of mortal comprehension. To their vitiated taste the simple pathos, which o'ersteps not the modesty of nature, appears cold, tame, and insipid; they must have *scènes* and a *coup de théâtre;* and ranting, and raving, and stabbing, and drowning, and poisoning; for with them there is no love without murder. Love, in their representations, is indeed a distorted, ridiculous, horrid monster, from whom common sense, taste, decency, and nature recoil.

But I will be calm. You say, my dear Leonora, that your judgment has not been blinded by Lady Olivia's fascinating manners; but that you are strongly influenced in her favour by that candour with which she has revealed to you all her faults. The value of candour in individuals should be measured by their sensibility to shame. When a woman throws off all restraint, and then desires me to admire her candour, I am astonished only at her assurance. Do not be the dupe of such candour. Lady Olivia avows a criminal passion, yet you say that you have no doubts of her innocence. The persuasion of your unsuspecting heart is no argument: when you give me any proofs in her favour, I shall pay them all due attention. In the mean time I have given you my opinion of those ladies who place themselves in the most perilous situations, and then expect you to believe them safe.

Olivia's professions of regard for you are indeed enthusiastic. She tells you, that "*your power is unlimited over her heart and understanding; that your friendship would be to her one of the greatest of earthly blessings.*" Maybe so—but I cannot wish you to be her friend.

With whatever confidence she makes the assertion, do not believe that she has a heart capable of feeling the value of yours. These sentimental, unprincipled women make the worst friends in the world. We are often told that "poor creatures! they do nobody any harm but themselves;" but in society it is scarcely possible for a woman to do harm to herself without doing harm to others; all her connexions must be involved in the consequences of her imprudence. Besides, what confidence can you repose in them? If you should happen to be an obstacle in the way of any of their fancies, do you think that they will respect you or your interest, when they have not scrupled to sacrifice their own to the gratification of their passions? Do you think that the gossamer of sentiment will restrain those whom the strong chains of prudence could not hold?

O! my dearest child, forcibly as these arguments carry conviction to my mind, I dread lest your compassionate, generous temper should prevent their reaching your understanding. Then let me conjure you, by all the respect which you have ever shown for your mother's opinions, by all that you hold dear or sacred, beware of forming an intimacy with an unprincipled woman. Believe me to be

Your truly affectionate mother,

LETTER VII.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

No daughter ever felt more respect for the opinions of a parent than I do for yours, my dearest mother; but you have never, even from childhood, required from me a blind submission—you have always encouraged me to desire conviction. And now, when the happiness of another is at stake, you will forgive me if I am less disposed to yield than I should be, I hope, if my own interest or taste were alone concerned.

You ask me what proofs I have of Lady Olivia's innocence. Believe me, I have such as are convincing to my unbiased judgment, and such as would be sufficient to satisfy all your doubts, were I at liberty to lay the whole truth before you. But even to exculpate her-

self, Olivia will not ruin in your opinion her husband, of whom you imagine that she has no reason to complain. I, who know how anxious she is to obtain your esteem, can appreciate the sacrifice that she makes; and in this instance, as in many others, I admire her magnanimity; it is equal to her candour, for which she is entitled to praise even by your own principles, dear mother: since, far from having *thrown off all restraint*, she is exquisitely susceptible of shame.

As to her understanding—have no persons of great talents ever been unfortunate? Frequently we see that they have not been able, by all their efforts and all their powers, to remedy the defects in the characters and tempers of those with whom they have unhappily been connected. Olivia married very young, and was unfortunately mistaken in her choice of a husband: on that subject I can only deplore her error and its consequences: but as to her disagreements with her own family, I do not think her to blame. For the mistakes we make in the choice of lovers or friends we may be answerable, but we cannot be responsible for the faults of the relations who are given to us by nature. If we do not please them it may be our misfortune; it is not necessarily our fault. I cannot be more explicit without betraying Lady Olivia's confidence, and implicating others in defending her.

With respect to that attachment of which you speak with so much just severity, she has given me the strongest assurances that she will do every thing in her power to conquer it. Absence, you know, is the first and the most difficult step; and this she has taken. Her course of reading displeases you: I cannot defend it: but I am persuaded that it is not a proof of her taste being vitiated. Many people read ordinary novels as others take snuff, merely from habit, from the want of petty excitation; and not, as you suppose, from the want of exorbitant or improper stimulus. Those who are unhappy have recourse to any trifling amusement that can change the course of their thoughts. I do not justify Olivia for having chosen such *comforters* as certain novels; but I pity her, and impute this choice to want of fortitude, not to depravity of taste. Before she married, a strict injunction was laid upon her not to read any book that was called a novel: this raised in her mind a sort of perverse curiosity. By making any

books or opinions contraband, the desire to read and circulate them is increased; bad principles are consequently smuggled into families, and, being kept secret, can never be subject to fair examination. I think it must be advantageous to the right side of any question, that all which can be said against it should be openly heard, that it may be answered. I do not

"Hate when vice can bolt her arguments;"

for I know that virtue has a tongue to answer her. The more vice repeats her assertions, the better; because, when familiarized, their boldness will not astound the understanding, and the charm of novelty will not be mistaken for the power of truth. We may observe, that the admiration for the class of writers to whom you allude, though violent in its commencement, has abated since they have been more known; and numbers, who began with rapture, have ended with disgust. Persons of vivacious imaginations, like Olivia, may be caught at first view by whatever has the appearance of grandeur or sublimity; but if time be allowed for examination, they will infallibly detect the disproportions, and these will ever afterward shock their taste: if you will not allow leisure for comparison—if you say, do not look at such strange objects, the obedient eyes may turn aside, but the rebel imagination pictures something a thousand times more wonderful and charming than the reality. I will venture to predict, that Olivia will soon be tired of the species of novels which she now admires, and that, once surfeited with these books, and convinced of their pernicious effects, she will never relapse into the practice of novel reading.

As to her taste for metaphysical books—dear mother, I am very daring to differ with you in so many points; but permit me to say, that I do not agree with you in detesting metaphysics. People may lose themselves in that labyrinth; but why should they meet with vice in the midst of it? The characters of a moralist, a practical moralist, and a metaphysician, are not incompatible, as we may see in many amiable and illustrious examples. To examine human motives, and the nature of the human mind, is not to destroy the power of virtue, or to increase the influence of vice. The chymist, after analyzing certain substances, and after discovering

their constituent parts, can lay aside all that is heterogeneous, and recompound the substance in a purer state. From analogy we might infer, that the motives of metaphysicians ought to be purer than those of the vulgar and ignorant. To discover the art of converting base into noble passions, or to obtain a universal remedy for all mental diseases, is perhaps beyond the power of metaphysicians; but in the pursuit useful discoveries may be made.

As to Olivia's letters—I am sorry I sent them to you; for I see that they have lowered, instead of raising, her in your opinion. But if you criticise letters written in openness and confidence of heart to a private friend, as if they were set before the tribunal of the public, you are—may I say it?—not only severe, but unjust; for you try and condemn the subjects of one country by the laws of another.

Dearest mother, be half as indulgent to Olivia as you are to me: indeed you are prejudiced against her; and because you see some faults, you think her whole character vicious. But would you cut down a fine tree because a leaf is withered, or because the canker-worm has eaten into the bud? Even if a main branch were decayed, are there not remedies which, skilfully applied, can save the tree from destruction, and perhaps restore it to its pristine beauty?

And now, having exhausted all my allusions, all my arguments, and all my little stock of eloquence, I must come to a plain matter of fact—

Before I received your letter I had invited Lady Olivia to spend some time at L—— Castle. I fear that you will blame my precipitation, and I reproach myself for it, because I know it will give you pain. However, though you will think me imprudent, I am certain you would rather that I were imprudent than unjust. I have defended Olivia from what I believe to be unmerited censure; I have invited her to my house; she has accepted my proffered kindness; to withdraw it afterward would be doing her irreparable injury: it would confirm all that the world can suspect: it would be saying to the censorious—I am convinced that you are right, and I deliver your victim up to you.

Thus I should betray the person whom I undertook to defend: her confidence in me, her having but for a moment accepted my protection, would be her ruin. I could not act in so base a manner.

Fear nothing for me, my best, but too anxious friend. I may do Lady Olivia some good; she can do me no harm. She may learn the principles which you have taught me; I can never catch from her any tastes or habits which you would disapprove. As to the rest, I hazard little or nothing. The hereditary credit which I enjoy in my maternal right enables me to assist others without injuring myself.

Your affectionate daughter,
LEONORA.

LETTER VIII.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

MY DEAREST CHILD,

I HOPE that you are in the right, and that I am in the wrong. Your affectionate mother,

———.

LETTER IX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

PREPARE yourself, my ever dear and charming Gabrielle, for all the torments of jealousy. Know, that since I came to England I have formed a new friendship with a woman who is interesting in the extreme, who has charmed me by the simplicity of her manners and the generous sensibility of her heart. Her character is certainly too reserved: yet even this defect has perhaps increased her power over my imagination, and consequently over my affections. I know not by what magic she has obtained it, but she has already an ascendency over me, which would quite astonish *you*, who know my wayward fancies and independent spirit.

Alas! I confess my heart is weak indeed; and I fear that all the power of friendship and philosophy combined will never strengthen it sufficiently. O, Gabrielle! how can I hope to obliterate from my soul that attachment which has marked the colour of my destiny for years? Yet such courage, such cruel courage is required of me, and of such I have boasted myself capable. Lady Leo-

nora L——, my new friend has, by all the English eloquence of virtue, obtained from me a promise, which, I fear, I shall not have the fortitude to keep—but I must make the attempt—Forbid R*** to write to me—Yes! I have written the words—Forbid R*** to write to me—Forbid him to think of me—I will do more—if possible I will forbid myself henceforward to think of him—to think of love—Adieu, my Gabrielle—All the illusions of life are over, and a dreary blank of future existence lies before me, terminated only by the grave. To-morrow I go to L—— Castle, with feelings which I can compare only to those of the unfortunate La Vallière when she renounced her lover, and resolved to bury herself in a cloister. Alas! why have not I the resource of devotion?

Your unhappy
OLIVIA.

LETTER X.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

PUBLISH my travels!—*Not I*, my dear friend. The world shall never have the pleasure of laughing at General B——'s trip to Paris. Before a man sets about to inform others, he should have seen, not only the surface but the bottom of things; he should have had, not only a *vue d'oiseau*, but (to use a celebrated naval commander's expression) a *vue de poisson* of his subject. By this time you must have heard enough of the Louvre and the Tuilleries, and Versailles, and la petit Trianon, and St. Cloud—and you have had enough of pictures and statues; and you know all that can be known of Bonaparte, by seeing him at a review or a levee; and the fashionable beauties and *celebrated characters* of the hour have all passed and repassed through the magic lantern. A fresh showman might make his figures a little more correct, or a little more in laughable caricature, but he could produce nothing new. Alas! there is nothing new under the sun. Nothing remains for the moderns, but to practise the oldest follies the newest ways. Would you, for the sake of your female friends, know the fashionable dress of a Parisian *elegante*, see Seneca on the transparent vestments of the Roman ladies, who, like these modern belles, were generous in the display

of their charms to the public. No doubt these French republicanists act upon the true Spartan principle of modesty: they take the most efficacious method to prevent their influence from being too great over the imaginations of men, by renouncing all that insidious reserve which alone can render even beauty permanently dangerous.

Of the cruelties of the revolution I can tell you nothing new. The public have been steeped up to the lips in blood, and have surely had their fill of horrors.

But, my dear friend, you say that I must be able to give a just view of the present state of French society, and of the best parts of it, because I have not, like some of my countrymen, hurried about Paris from one *spectacle* to another, seen the opera, and the play-houses, and the masked balls, and the gaming-houses, and the women of the Palais Royale, and the lions of all sorts; gone through the usual routine of presentation and public dinners, drunk French wine, damned French cookery, and "come home content." I have certainly endeavoured to employ my time better, and have had the good fortune to be admitted into the best *private societies* in Paris. These were composed of the remains of the French nobility, of men of letters and science, and of families who, without interfering in politics, devote themselves to domestic duties, to literary and social pleasures. The happy hours I have passed in this society can never be forgotten, and the kindness I have received has made its full impression upon an honest English heart. I will never disgrace the confidence of my friends, by drawing their characters for the public.

Cæsar, in all his glory, and all his despotism, could not, with impunity, force a Roman knight* to go upon the stage: but modern anecdote-mongers, more cruel and insolent than Cæsar, force their friends of all ages and sexes to appear, and speak, and act, for the amusement or derision of the public.

My dear friend, is not my resolution never to favour the world with my tour well grounded? I hope that I have proved to your satisfaction, that I could tell people nothing but what I do not understand, or what is not worth telling them, or what has been told them a hundred times, or what, as a gentleman, I am bound not to publish.

Yours truly,

J. B.

* Laberius.

LETTER XI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

I.—— Castle.

FRIENDSHIP, my amiable and interesting Gabrielle, is more an affair of the heart than of the head, more the instinct of taste than the choice of reason. With me the heart is no longer touched, when the imagination ceases to be charmed. Explain to me this metaphysical phenomenon of my nature, and, for your reward, I will quiet your jealousy, by confessing without compunction what now weighs on my conscience terribly. I begin to feel that I can never love this English friend as I ought. She is *too English*—far too English for one who has known the charms of French ease, vivacity, and sentiment; for one who has seen the bewitching Gabrielle's infinite variety.

Leonora has just the figure and face that you would picture to yourself for *une belle Angloise;* and if our Milton comes into your memory, you might repeat, for the quotation is not too trite for a foreigner.

> "Grace is in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
> In every gesture dignity and love."

But then it is grace which says nothing, a heaven only for a husband, the dignity more of a matron than of a heroine, and love that might have suited Eve before she had seen this world. Leonora is certainly a beauty; but then a beauty who does not know her power, and who, consequently, can make no one else feel its full extent. She is not unlike your beautiful Polish princess, but she has nothing of the charming Anastasia's irresistible transitions from soft, silent languor, to brilliant, eloquent enthusiasm. All the gestures and attitudes of Anastasia are those of taste and sentiment; Leonora's are simply those of nature. *La belle nature*, but not *le beau idéal*. With a figure that would grace any court, or shine upon any stage, she usually enters a room without producing, or thinking of producing, any sensation; she moves often without seeming to have any other intention than to change her place; and her fine eyes generally look as if they were made only to see

with. At times she certainly has a most impressive and intelligent countenance. I have seen her face enlightened by the fire of genius, and shaded by the exquisite touches of sensibility; but all this is merely called forth by the occasion, and vanishes before it is noticed by half the company. Indeed, the full radiance of her beauty or of her wit seldom shines upon any one but her husband. The audience and spectators are forgotten. Heavens! what a difference between the effect which Leonora and Gabrielle produce! But, to do her justice, much of this arises from the different *organization* of French and English society. In Paris the insipid details of domestic life are judiciously kept behind the scenes, and women appear as heroines upon the stage, with all the advantages of decoration, to listen to the language of love, and to receive the homage of public admiration. In England, gallantry is not yet *systematized*, and our sex look more to their families than to what is called *society* for the happiness of existence. And yet the affection of mothers for their children does not appear to be so strong in the hearts of English as of French women. In England ladies do not talk of the *sentiment of maternity* with that elegance and sensibility with which you expiate upon it continually in conversation. They literally are *des bonnes mères de famille*, not from the impulse of sentiment, but merely from an early instilled sense of duty, for which they deserve little credit. However, they devote their lives to their children, and those who have the misfortune to be their intimate friends are doomed to see them half the day, or all day long, go through the part of the good mother in all its diurnal monotony of lessons and caresses. All this may be vastly right—it is a pity it is so tiresome. For my part I cannot conceive how persons of superior taste and talents can submit to it, unless it be to make themselves a reputation; and that, you know, is done by writing and talking on the general principles, not by submitting to the minute details of education. The great painter sketches the outline, and touches the principal features, but leaves the subordinate drudgery of filling up the parts, finishing the drapery, &c., to inferior hands.

Upon recollection, in my favourite "Sorrows of Werter," the heroine is represented cutting bread and butter for a group of children: I admire this simplicity

in Goethe; 'tis one of the secrets by which he touches the heart. Simplicity is delightful by way of variety, but always simplicity is worse than *toujours perdrix*. Children in a novel or a drama are charming little creatures: but in real life they are often insufferable plagues. What becomes of them in Paris I know not; but I am sure that they are never in the way of one's conversations or reveries; and it would be a blessing to society if English children were as inaudible and invisible. These things strike me sensibly upon my return to England after so long an absence. Surely, by means of the machinery of masters, and governesses, and schools, the manufacture of education might be carried on without incommoding those who desire to see only the finished production. Here I find the daughter of an English duke, a woman in the first bloom of youth, of the highest pretensions in point of rank, beauty, fashion, accomplishments, and talents, devoting herself to the education of two children, orphans, left to her care by an elder sister. To take charge of orphans is a good and fine action; as such it touches me sensibly; but then where is the necessity of sacrificing one's friends, and one's pleasures, day after day, and hour after hour, to mere children? Leonora can persevere only from a notion of duty. Now, in my opinion, when generosity becomes duty it ceases to be virtue. Virtue requires free-will: duty implies constraint.—Virtue acts from the impulse of the moment, and never tires, or is tired; duty drudges on in consequence of reflection, and, weary herself, wearies all beholders. Duty, always laborious, never can be graceful; and what is not graceful in woman cannot be amiable—can it, my amiable Gabrielle? But I reproach myself for all I have written. Leonora is my friend—besides, I am really obliged to her, and for the universe would I not hint a thought to her disadvantage. Indeed, she is a most excellent, a faultless character, and it is the misfortune of your Olivia not to love perfection as she ought.

My charming and interesting Gabrielle, I am more out of humour with myself than you can conceive; for in spite of all that reason and gratitude urge, I fear I cannot prefer the insipid virtues of Leonora to the lively graces of Gabrielle.

As to the cold husband, Mr. L——, I neither know nor wish to know any thing of him; but I live in hopes of an agreeable and interesting accession to our society

to-day, from the arrival of Leonora's intimate friend, a young widow, whose husband I understand was a man of a harsh temper: she has gone through severe trials with surprising fortitude; and though I do not know her history, I am persuaded it must be interesting. Assuredly this husband could never have been the man of her choice, and of course she must have had some secret unhappy attachment, which doubtless preyed upon her spirits. Probably the object of her affection, in despair at her marriage, plighted his faith unfortunately, or possibly may have fallen a sacrifice to his constancy. I am all impatience to see her. Her husband's name was so ruggedly English, that I am sure you would never be able to pronounce it, especially if you only saw it written; therefore I shall always to you call her Helen, a name which is more pleasing to the ear, and more promising to the imagination. I have not been able to prevail upon Leonora to describe her friend to me exactly; she says only that she loves Helen too well to overpraise her beforehand. My busy fancy has, however, bodied forth her form, and painted her in the most amiable and enchanting colours. Hark! she is just arrived. Adieu.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XII.

FROM MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

* * * * * * *

HAVING now had the honour of spending nearly a week in the society of the celebrated enchantress, Lady Olivia, you will naturally expect that I should be much improved in the art of love: but before I come to my improvements I must tell you, what will be rather more interesting, that Leonora is perfectly well and happy, and that I have the dear delight of exclaiming ten times an hour, "Ay, just as I thought it would be!—Just such a wife, just such a mistress of a family I knew she would make."

"*Not to admire*," is an art or a precept which I have not been able to practise much since I came here. Some philosophers tell us that admiration is not only a silly but a fatiguing state of mind; and I suppose that

nothing could have preserved my mind from being tired to death but the quantity of bodily exercise which I have taken. I could, if I pleased, give you a plan and elevation of this castle. Nay, I doubt not but I could stand an examination in the catalogue of the pictures, or the inventory of the furniture.

You, Helen!—you who could not remember the colour of Lady N——'s *new* curtains after you had seen them at least a hundred times!

Lady N—— was indifferent to me, and how could I hang up her curtains in my memory! By what could they hold! Do you not know, Margaret . . . . all the fine things that I could say, and that quartos have said before me, about the association of ideas and sensations, &c.! Those we love impart to uninteresting objects the power of pleasing, as the magnet can communicate to inert metal its attractive influence.

Till Mr. L—— was Leonora's lover I never liked him much. I do not mean to call him inert. I always knew that he had many excellent qualities; but there was nothing in his temper peculiarly agreeable to me, and there was something in his character that I did not thoroughly understand; yet since he is become Leonora's husband I find my understanding much improved, and I dare say it will soon be so far enlarged that I shall comprehend him perfectly.

Leonora has almost persuaded me to like Lady Olivia. Not to laugh at her would be impossible. I wish you could see the way in which we go on together. Our first setting out would have diverted you. Enter Lady Olivia breathless, with an air of theatric expectation—advances to embrace Helen, who is laughing with Leonora—her back turned towards the side of the stage at which Olivia enters—Olivia pauses suddenly, and measures Helen *with a long look*. What passes in Lady Olivia's mind at this moment I do not know, but I guess that she was disappointed wofully by my appearance. After some time she was recovered, by Leonora's assistance, from her revery, and presently began to admire my vivacity, and to find out that I was Clarissa's Miss Howe —no, I was Lady G.—no, I was Heloise's Clara: but I, choosing to be myself, and insisting upon being an *original*, sank again visibly and rapidly in Olivia's opinion, till I was in imminent danger of being *nobody*. Leonora again kindly interposed to save me from annihilation;

and after an interval of an hour or two, dedicated to letter-writing, Lady Olivia returned and seated herself beside me, resolved to decide what manner of woman I was. Certain novels are the touchstones of feeling and *intellect* with certain ladies. Unluckily, I was not well read in these; and in the questions put to me from these sentimental statute-books, I gave strange judgments, often for the husband or parents against the heroine. I did not even admit the plea of destiny, irresistible passion, or *entraînement*, as in all cases sufficient excuse for all errors and crimes. Moreover, I excited astonishment by calling things by obsolete names. I called a married woman's having a lover, *a crime!* Then I was no judge of virtues, for I thought a wife's making an intimate friend of her husband's mistress was scandalous and mean; but this I was told is the height of delicacy and generosity. I could not perceive the propriety of a man's liking two women at the same time, or a woman's having a platonic attachment for half a dozen lovers; and I owned that I did not wish divorce could be as easily obtained in England as in France. All which proved that I have never been out of England—a great misfortune! I dare say it will soon be discovered that women as well as Madeira cannot be good for any thing till they have crossed the line. But beside the obloquy of having lived only in the best company in England, I was further disgraced by the discovery, that I am deplorably ignorant of metaphysics, and have never been enlightened by any philanthropic transcendental foreign professor of humanity. Profoundly humiliated, and not having yet taken the first step towards knowledge, the knowing that I was ignorant, I was pondering upon my sad fate, when Lady Olivia, putting her hand upon my shoulder, summoned me into the court of love, there in my own proper person to answer such questions as it should please her ladyship to ask. For instance:—"Were you ever in love?—How often?—When?—Where?—And with whom?"

Never having stood a cross-examination in public upon these points, I was not quite prepared to reply; and I was accused of giving evasive answers, and convicted of blushing. Mr. L——, who was present at this examination, enjoyed, in his grave way, my astonishment and confusion, but said not one word. I rallied my spirits and my wits, and gave some answers which gained the smile of the court on my side.

From these specimens you may guess, my dear Margaret, how well this lady and I are likely to agree. I shall divert myself with her absurdities without scruple. Yet, notwithstanding the flagrancy of these, Leonora persuades me to think well of Olivia; indeed I am so happy here, that it would be a difficult matter at present to make me think ill of anybody. The good qualities which Leonora sees in her are not yet visible to my eyes; but Leonora's visual orb is so cleared with charity and love, that she can discern what is not revealed to vulgar sight. Even in the very germ she discovers the minute form of the perfect flower. *The Olivia* will, I hope, in time blow out in full perfection.

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XIII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Monday.

O MY Gabrielle! this Helen is not precisely the person that I expected. Instead of being a dejected beauty, she is all life and gayety.

I own I should like her better if she were a little more pensive; a tinge of melancholy would, in her situation, be so becoming and natural. My imagination was quite disappointed when I beheld the quickness of her eyes and frequency of her smiles. Even her mode of showing affection to Leonora was not such as could please me. This is the first visit, I understand, that she has paid Leonora since her marriage: these friends have been separated for many months. I was not present at their meeting; but I came into the room a few minutes after *Helen's* arrival, and I should have thought that they had seen one another but yesterday. This *dear Helen* was quite at ease and at home in a few moments, and seemed as if she had been living with us for years. I make allowance for the ease of well-bred people. Helen has lived much in the world, and has polished manners. But the heart—the heart is superior to politeness; and even ease, in some situations, shows a want of the delicate *tact* of sentiment. In a similar situation I should have been silent, entranced, absorbed,

in my sensations—overcome by them, perhaps—dissolved in tears. But in Helen there appeared no symptoms of real sensibility—nothing characteristic—nothing profound—nothing concentrated: it was all superficial, and evaporated in the common way. I was provoked to see Leonora satisfied. She assures me that Helen has uncommonly strong affections, and that her character rather exceeds than is deficient in enthusiasm. Possibly; but I am certain that Helen is in no danger of becoming romantic. Far from being abstracted, I never saw any one seem more interested and eager about every present occurrence—pleased, even to childishness, with every passing trifle. I confess that she is too much of this world for me. But I will if possible suspend my judgment, and study her a few hours longer before I give you my definite opinion.

Thursday.

Well, my Gabrielle, my *definitive opinion* is that I can never love this friend of Leonora. I said that she had lived much in the world—but only in the English world: she has never seen any other; therefore, though quite in a different style from Leonora, she shocks me with the same nationality. All her ideas are exclusively English: she has what is called English good sense, and English humour, and English prejudices of *all sorts*, both masculine and feminine. She takes fire in defence of her country and of her sex; nay, sometimes blushes even to awkwardness, which one would not expect in the midst of her good-breeding and vivacity. What a difference between her vivacity and that of my charming Gabrielle! as great as between the enlargement of your mind and the limited nature of her understanding. I tried her on various subjects, but found her intrenched in her own contracted notions. All new, or liberal, or sublime ideas in morality or metaphysics she either cannot seize, or seizes only to place in a ridiculous point of view: a certain sign of mediocrity. Adieu, my Gabrielle. I must send you the pictures, whether engaging or forbidding, of those with whom your Olivia is destined to pass her time. When I have no events to relate, still I must write to convey to you my sentiments. Alas! how imperfectly!—for I have interdicted

myself the expression of those most interesting to my heart. Leonora, calmly prudent, coolly virtuous, knows not what it costs me to be faithful to this cruel promise. Write to me, my sympathizing, my tender friend!

Your ever unhappy

OLIVIA.

LETTER XIV.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——

July 10th.

SOME very good people, like some very fine pictures, are best at a distance. But Leonora is not one of these: the nearer you approach the better you like her, as in arabesque-work you may admire the beauty of the design even at a distance, but you cannot appreciate the delicacy of the execution till you examine it closely, and discover that every line is formed of grains of gold almost imperceptibly fine. I am glad that the "small sweet courtesies of life" have been hailed by one sentimental writer at least. The minor virtues are not to be despised even in comparison with the most exalted. The common rose, I have often thought, need not be ashamed of itself even in company with the finest exotics in a hothouse; and I remember that your brother, in one of his letters, observed, that the common cock makes a very respectable figure even in the grand Parisian assembly of all the stuffed birds and beasts in the universe. It is a glorious thing to have a friend who will jump into a river, or down a precipice, to save one's life: but as I do not intend to tumble down precipices, or to throw myself into the water above half a dozen times, I would rather have for my friends persons who would not reserve their kindness wholly for these grand occasions, but who could condescend to make me happy every day, and all day long, even by actions not sufficiently sublime to be recorded in history or romance.

Do not infer from this that I think Leonora would hesitate to make *great* sacrifices. I have had sufficient experience of her fortitude and active courage of mind in the most trying circumstances, while many who talked more stoutly shrank from *committing* themselves by actions.

Some maxim-maker says, that past misfortunes are good for nothing but to be forgotten. I am not of his opinion: I think that they are good to make us know our winter from our summer friends, and to make us feel for those who have sustained us in adversity that most pleasurable sensation of the human mind—gratitude.

But I am straying unawares into the province of sentiment, where I am such a stranger that I shall inevitably lose my way, especially as I am too proud to take a guide. Lady Olivia **** may perhaps be very fond of Leonora: and as she has every possible cause to be so, it is but reasonable and charitable to suppose that she is: but I should never guess it by her manner. She speaks of her friendship sometimes in the most romantic style, but often makes observations upon *the enviable coolness and imperturbability of Leonora's disposition*, which convinces me that she does not understand it in the least. Those who do not really feel always pitch their expressions too high or too low, as deaf people bellow or speak in a whisper. But I may be mistaken in my suspicions of Olivia; for *to do the lady justice*, as Mrs. Candour would say, she is so affected that it is difficult to know what she really feels. Those who put on rouge occasionally are suspected of wearing it constantly, and never have any credit for their natural colour; presently they become so accustomed to common rouge, that mistaking scarlet for pale pink, they persist in laying on more and more, till they are like nothing human. Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——

I HAVE found it! I have found it! dear Gabrielle, rejoice with me! I have solved the metaphysical problem, which perplexed me so cruelly, and now I am once more at peace with myself. I have discovered the reason why I cannot love Leonora as she merits to be loved—she has obliged me; and the nature of obligation is such, that it supposes superiority on one side, and consequently destroys the equality, the freedom, the ease, the charm of friendship. Gratitude weighs upon one's heart in proportion to the delicacy of its feelings.

To minds of an ordinary sort it may be pleasurable, for with them it is sufficiently feeble to be calm; but in souls of a superior cast, it is a poignant, painful sensation, because it is too strong ever to be tranquil. In short,

"'Tis bliss but to a certain bound—
Beyond, 'tis agony."

For my own part, the very dread that I shall not be thought to express enough deprives me of the power to speak, or even to feel. Fear, you know, extinguishes affection; and of all fears the dread of not being sufficiently grateful operates the most powerfully. Thus sensibility destroys itself. Gracious Heaven! teach me to moderate mine.

In the nature of the obligation with which Leonora has oppressed my heart there is something peculiarly humiliating. Upon my return to this country I found the malignant genius of scandal bent upon destroying my reputation. You have no idea of the miserable force of prejudice which still prevails here. There are some women who emancipate themselves; but then, unluckily, they are not in sufficient numbers to keep each other in countenance in public. One would not choose to be confined to the society of people who cannot go to court, though sometimes they take the lead elsewhere. We are full half a century behind you in civilization; and your revolution has, I find, afforded all our stiffened moralists *incontrovertible* arguments against liberty of opinion or conduct in either sex.

I was thunderstruck when I saw the grave and repulsive faces of all my female acquaintance. At first I attributed every thing that was strange and disagreeable to English reserve, of which I had retained a sufficiently formidable idea: but I presently found that there was some other cause which kept all these nice consciences at a distance from my atmosphere.

Would you believe it, I saw myself upon the point of being quite excluded from good society. Leonora saved me from this imminent danger. Voluntarily, and I must say nobly, if not gracefully, Leonora came forward in my defence. Vanquishing her natural English timidity, she braved the eyes, and tongues, and advice of all the prudes and old dowagers my enemies, among whom I may count the superannuated duchess her mother, the proud

est dowager now living. When I appeared in public with a personage of Leonora's unblemished reputation, scandal, much against her will, was forced to be silent; and it was to be taken for granted that I was, in the language of prudery, perfectly innocent. Leonora, to be consistent in goodness, or to complete her triumph in the face of the world, invited me to accompany her to the country. I have now been some weeks at this superb castle. Heaven is my witness that I came with a heart overflowing with affection; but the painful, the agonizing sense of humiliation mixed with my tenderest sentiments, and all became bitterness insufferable. O Gabrielle! you, and perhaps you alone upon earth, can understand my feelings. Adieu!—pity me. I must not ask you a single question about—I must not write the name for ever dear. What am I saying? where are my promises? Adieu!—adieu!

Your unhappy
OLIVIA.

LETTER XVI.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

July 16th.

As I have never thought it my duty in this mortal life to mourn for the absurdities of my fellow-creatures, I should now enjoy the pleasure of laughing at Lady Olivia, if my propensity were not checked by a serious apprehension that she will injure Leonora's happiness. From the most generous motives dear Leonora is continually anxious to sooth her mind, to persuade and reason her into common sense, to re-establish her in public opinion, and to make her happy. But I am convinced that Lady Olivia never will have common sense, and consequently never can be happy. Twenty times a day I wish her at the antipodes; for I dread lest Leonora should be implicated in her affairs, and involved in her misery.

Last night this foolish woman, who unluckily is graced with all the power of words, poured forth a fine declamation in favour of divorce. In vain Leonora reasoned, expostulated, blushed. Lady Olivia cannot blush for herself; and though both Mr. L—— and I were present,

he persisted with the [illegible]
[illegible] interest [illegible]
[illegible] to try to obtain [illegible]
he may marry [illegible]
[illegible] this for Leonora [illegible]
[illegible] who will [illegible]
[illegible] but [illegible]
[illegible] this is only Olivia [illegible]
she does not [illegible]
[illegible] like one [illegible]
[illegible] a woman who [illegible]
[illegible] by playing the [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] the most [illegible]
[illegible] iron [illegible]
strain herself [illegible]
[illegible] as far iron [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] Leonora [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] herself [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

what I know of Lady Olivia ——. What is your reason for asking? Till you have answered this question, hope for no information from me. Seriously, Lady Olivia had left Paris before I arrived; therefore you cannot have my judgment of her ladyship, which I presume is all you could depend upon. If you will take hearsay evidence, and if you wish me to speak to general character, I can readily satisfy you. Common repute is loud and unanimous in favour of her talents, beauty, and fashion: there is no resisting, I am told, the fascination of her manners and conversation; *but* her opinions are fashionably liberal, and her practice as liberal as her theories. Since her separation from her husband, her lover is publicly named. Some English friends plead in her favour platonic attachment: this, like benefit of clergy, is claimed of course for a first offence; but Lady Olivia's Parisian acquaintance are not so scrupulous or so old-fashioned as to think it an offence: they call it an *arrangement*, and to this there can be no objection. As a French gentleman said to me the other day, with an unanswerable shrug, "Tout le monde sait que R*** est son amant; d'ailleurs,c'est la femme la plus aimable du monde."

As to Lady Olivia's friend Mad. de P——, she sees a great deal of company: her house is the resort of people of various descriptions; ministers, foreigners, coquettes, and generals; in short, of all those who wish without scandal or suspicion to intrigue either in love or politics. Her assemblies are also frequented by a few of *l'ancien régime*, who wish to be in favour with the present government. Mad. de P——, of a noble family herself, and formerly much at court, has managed matters so as to have regained all her husband's confiscated property, and to have acquired much influence with some of the leading men of the day. In her manners and conversation there is an odd mixture of frivolity and address, of the airs of coquetry and the jargon of sentiment. She has the politeness of a French countess, with *exquisite* knowledge of the world and of *les convenances*, joined to that freedom of opinion which marks the present times. In the midst of all these inconsistencies it is difficult to guess what her real character may be. At first sight, I should pronounce her to be a silly woman, governed by vanity and the whim of the moment: but those who know her better than I do believe her to be a woman of

considerable talents, inordinately fond of power, and uniformly intent upon her own interest, using coquetry only as a means to govern our sex, and frivolity as a mask for her ambition. In short, Mad. de P—— is a perfect specimen of the combination of an *intrigante* and an *élégante*, a combination often found in Paris. Here women mingle politics and gallantry—men mix politics and epicurism. Which is the better mixture?

I have business of importance to my country to transact to day; *therefore* I am going to dine with the modern Apicius. Excuse me, my dear friend, if I cannot stay at present to answer your questions about divorce. I must be punctual. What sort of a negotiator can he make who is too late at a minister's dinner? Five minutes might change the face of Europe.

Yours truly,
J. B

LETTER XVIII.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

My incomparable Olivia! your letters are absolutely divine. I am *maussade*, I *vegetate*. I cannot be said to live the days when I do not hear from you. Last Thursday I was disappointed of one of these dear letters, and *Brave-et-tendre* told me frankly that I was so little amiable he should not have known me. As to the rest, pardon me for not writing punctually: I have been really in a chaos of business and pleasure; and I do not know which fatigues most. But I am obliged to attend the ministers every day, for the sake of my friends.

A thousand and a thousand thanks for your pictures of your English friends: sketches by a masterly hand must be valuable, whatever the subject. I would rather have the pictures than the realities. Your Helen and your Lady Leonora are too good for me, and I pity you from my soul for being shut up in that old castle. I suppose it is like an old castle in Dauphiny where I once spent a week, and where I was nearly frightened to death by the flapping of the old tapestry behind my bed, and by the bats which flew in through the broken win-

dows. They say, however, that our *châteaux* and yours are something different. Of this I have no clear conception.

I send you three comforters in your prison—a billet-doux, a new novel, and a pattern of my sandal: a billet-doux from R*** says every thing for itself; but I must say something for the new novel. Zenobie, which I now send you, is the declared rival of Seraphine. Parties have run high on both sides, and applications were made and innuendoes discovered, and wit and sentiment came to close combat; and, as usual, people talked till they did not understand themselves. For a fortnight, wherever one went, the first words to be heard on entering every *salon* were Seraphine and Zenobie. Peace or war. Mlle. Georges and Mlle. Duchesnois were nothing to Seraphine and Zenobie. For heaven's sake tell me which you prefer! But I fear they will be no more talked of before I have your answer. To say the truth, I am tired of both heroines, for a fortnight is too long to talk or think of any one thing.

I flatter myself you will like my sandals: they are my own invention, and my foot really shows them to advantage. You know I might say, as Du P*** said of himself, "J'ai un pied dont la petitesse échappe á la vitesse de la pensée." I thought my poor friend Mad. Dumarais would have died with envy the other day, when I appeared in them at her ball, which, by-the-by, was in all its decorations as absurd and in as bad taste as usual. For the most part these *nouveaux riches* lavish money, but can never purchase taste or a sense of propriety. All is gold: but that is not enough; or rather that is too much. In spite of all that both the Indies, China, Arabia, Egypt, and even Paris can do for them, they will be ever out of place in the midst of their magnificence: they will never even know how to ruin themselves nobly. They must live and die as they were born, ridiculous. Now I would rather not exist than feel myself ridiculous. But I believe no one living, not even le petit D'Heronville, knows himself to be an object of ridicule. There are no looking-glasses for the mind, and I question whether we should use them if there were. D'Heronville is just as you left him, and as much my amusement as he used to be yours. He goes on with an eternal galimatias of patriotism, with such a self-sufficient air and decided tone! never suspecting that he

says only what other people make him say, and that he is listened to only to find out what *some people* think. Many will say before fools what they would not hazard before wise men; not considering that fools can repeat as well as parrots. I once heard a great man remark, that the only spies fit to be trusted are those who do not know themselves to be such, who have no salary but what their vanity pays them, and who are employed without being accredited.

But trève de politique!—My charming Olivia, I know, abhors politics as much as I detest metaphysics, from all lips or pens but hers. Now I must tell you something of your friends here.

O—— talks nonsense as agreeably as ever, and dances as divinely. 'Tis a pity he cannot always dance, for then he would not ruin himself at play. He wants me to get him a regiment—as if I had any power!—or as if I would use it for this purpose, when I know that my interesting friend Mad. Q—— would break her poor little heart if he were to quit her.

Mon Cœur is as pretty as ever; but she is now in affliction. She has lost her dear little dog Corisonde. He died suddenly; almost in her arms! She will erect a monument to him in her charming *jardin Anglois*. This will occupy her, and then "Time, the comforter" —Inimitable Voltaire!

Our dear *Brillante* has just had a superb *hommage* from her lover the commissary—a necklace and bracelets of the finest pearls: but she cannot wear them yet: her brother having died last week, she is in deep mourning. This brother was not upon good terms with her. He never forgave the divorce. He thought it a disgrace to have a sister *une divorcée;* but he was full of prejudice, poor man, and he is dead, and we need think no more of him or of his faults.

Our ci-devant chanoine, who married that little Meudon, is as miserable as possible, and as ridiculous: for he is jealous of his young wife, and she is a *franche-coquette*. The poor man looks as if he repented sincerely of his errors. What a penitent a coquette can make of a husband! Bourdaloue and Massillon would have tried their powers on this man's heart in vain.

Did I tell you that Mad. G—— is a second time divorced? But this time it is her husband's doing, not hers. This handsome husband has spent all the

immense fortune she brought him, and now procures a divorce for *incompatibility of temper*, and is going to marry another lady, richer than Mad. G——, and as great a fool. This system of divorce, though convenient, is not always advantageous to women. However, in one point of view, I wonder that the rigid moralists do not defend it, as the only means of making a man in love with his own wife. A man divorces; the law does not permit him to marry the same woman afterward; of course this prohibition makes him fall in love with her. Of this we have many edifying examples besides Fanchette, who, though she was so beautiful, and a tolerable actress, would never have drawn all Paris to the Vaudeville if she had not been a *divorcée*, and if it had not been known that her husband, who played the lover of the piece, was dying to marry her again. Apropos, Mad. St. Germain is acting one of her own romances, in the high sublime style, and threatens to poison herself for love of her perjured inconstant—but it will not do.

Madame *la Grande* was near having a sad accident the other night: in crossing the Pont-neuf her horses took fright; for there was a crowd and *embarras*, a man having just drowned himself—not for love, but for hunger. How many men, women, and children do you think drowned themselves in the Seine last year? Upwards of two hundred. This is really shocking, and a stop should be put to it by authority. It absolutely makes me shudder and reflect; but *après nous le déluge* was La Pompadour's maxim, and should be ours.

Mad. Folard *se coiffe en cheveux*, and Mad. Rocroix crowns herself with roses, while all the world knows that either of them is old enough to be my mother. In former days a woman could not wear flowers after thirty, and was *bel esprit* or *dévote* at forty, for it was thought bad taste to do otherwise. But now everybody may be as young as they please, or as ridiculous. Women have certainly gained by the new order of things.

Our poor friend *Vermeille* se meurt de la poitrine—a victim to tea and late hours. She is an interesting creature, and my heart bleeds for her: she will never last till winter.

Do you know, it is said we shall soon have no wood to burn? What can have become of all our forests?

People should inquire after them. The Venus de Medicis has at last found her way down the Seine. It is not determined yet where to place her: but she is at Paris, and that is a great point gained for her. You complained that the Apollo stands with his back so near the wall, that there is no seeing half the beauties of his shoulders. If I have any influence, Venus shall not be so served. I have been to see her. She is certainly divine—but not French. I do not despair of seeing her surpassed by our artists.

Adieu, my adorable Olivia. I should have finished my letter yesterday; but when I came home in the morning, expecting to have a moment sacred to you and friendship, who should I find established in an armchair in my cabinet but our old countess *Ci-devant*. There was no retreat for me. In the midst of my concentrated rage I was obliged to advance and embrace her, and there was an end of happiness for the day. The pitiless woman kept me till it was even too late to dress, talking over her family misfortunes: as if they were any thing to me. She wants to get her son employed, but her pride will not let her pay her court properly, and she wants me to do it for her. Not I, truly. I should shut my doors against her but for the sake of her nephew *le roué*, who is really a pretty young man. My angel, I embrace you tenderly.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER XIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

How melancholy to a feeling heart is the moment when illusion vanishes, whether that illusion has been created by the magic of love or of friendship! How many such moments, Gabrielle, has your unfortunate friend been doomed to endure! Alas! when will treacherous fancy cease to throw a deceitful brilliancy upon each new object!

Perhaps I am too delicate—but R***'s note, enclosed in your last, my Gabrielle, was unlike his former letters. It was not passionate, it was only reasonable. A man who can reason is no longer in love. The manner in which he speaks of divorce shocked me beyond

expression. Is it for him to talk of scruples, when upon this subject I have none? I own to you that my pride and my tenderness are sensibly wounded. Is it for him to convince me that I am in the wrong? I shall not be at ease till I hear from you again, my amiable friend; for my residence here becomes insupportable. But a few short weeks are past since I fancied Leonora an angel, and now she falls below the ordinary standard of mortals. But a few short weeks are past since, in the full confidence of finding Leonora a second self, a second Gabrielle, I eagerly developed to her my inmost soul; yet now my heart closes, I fear never more to open. The sad conviction that we have but few ideas, and no feelings, in common, stops my tongue when I attempt to speak, chills my heart when I begin to listen.

Do you know, my Gabrielle, I have discovered that Leonora is inordinately selfish? For all other faults I have charity; but selfishness, which has none to give, must expect none. O divine sensibility, defend me from this isolation of the heart! All thy nameless sorrows, all thy heart-rending tortures, would I a thousand times rather endure. Leonora's selfishness breaks out perpetually; and, alas! it is of the most inveterate, incurable kind: every thing that is immediately or remotely connected with self she loves, and loves with the most provoking pertinacity. Her mother, her husband, she adores, because they are her own; and even her sister's children, because she considers them, she says, as her own. All and every possible portion of self she cherishes with the most sordid partiality. All that touches these relations touches her; and every thing which is theirs, or, in other words, which is hers, she deems excellent and sacred. Last night I just hazarded a word of ridicule upon some of the obsolete prejudices of that august personage, that duchess of old tapestry, her still living ancestor. I wish, Gabrielle, you had seen Leonora's countenance. Her colour rose up to her temples, her eyes lightened with indignation, and her whole person assumed a dignity, which might have killed a presumptuous lover, or, better far, might have enslaved him for life. What folly to waste all this upon such an occasion. But selfishness is ever blind to its real interests. Leonora is so bigoted to this old woman, that she is already in mind an old

woman herself. She fancies that she traces a resemblance to her mother, and of course to dear self, in her infant, and she looks upon it with such doting eyes, and talks to it with such exquisite tones of fondness, as are to me, who know the source from which they proceed, quite ridiculous and disgusting. An infant, who has no imaginable merit, and, to impartial eyes, no charms, she can love to this excess from no motive but pure *egotism*. Then her husband—but this subject I must reserve for another letter. I am summoned to walk with him this moment.

Adieu, charming Gabrielle.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XX.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Paris, 180—

MY DEAR L——,

ENCLOSED I send you, according to your earnest desire, Cambacere's reflections upon the intended new law of divorce. Give me leave to ask why you are so violently interested upon this occasion? Do you envy France this blessing? Do you wish that English husbands and wives should have the power of divorcing each other at pleasure for *incompatibility of temper*? And have you calculated the admirable effect this would produce upon the temper both of the weaker and the stronger sex? To bear and forbear would then be no longer necessary. Every happy pair might quarrel and part at a moment's notice—at a year's notice at most. And their children? The wisdom of Solomon would be necessary to settle the just division of the children. I have this morning been attending a court of law, to hear a famous trial between two husbands: the abdicated lord a ci-devant noble, and the reigning husband a ci-devant grand-vicaire, who has *reformed*. Each party claimed a right to the children by the first marriage, for the children were minors, entitled to large fortunes. The *reformed* grand-vicaire pleaded his own cause with astonishing assurance, amid the discountenancing looks, murmurs, and almost amid the groans of disapprobation from the majority of the auditors. His powers of impudence, however, failed him

at last. I sat on the bench behind him, and saw that his ears had the grace to blush. After another hearing, this cause, which had lasted four years, was decided: and the first husband and real father was permitted to have the guardianship of his own children. During the four years' litigation, the friends of the parties, from the grandmother downwards, were all at irreconcilable variance. What became of the children all this time? Their mother was represented during the trial as she deserved to be—as a wretch void of shame and gratitude. The father was universally pitied, though his rival painted him as a coward, who during the revolution had left his children to save himself by flight; and as a fool, who had left his wife to the care of a profligate grand-vicaire. Divorce is not countenanced by opinion in Paris, though permitted by law. With a few exceptions in extraordinary cases, I have observed that *les divorcées* are not received into good society.

To satiate your curiosity, I send you all the papers that have been written lately on this subject, of which you will find that of Cambaceres the best. The wits say that he is an impartial judge. I presume you want these pamphlets for some foolish friend; for yourself you can never want them, blessed as you are with such a wife as Lady Leonora L——. I am not surprised that profligate men should wish for freedom of divorce, because it would save them damages in Doctors' Commons: but you rather astonish me—if a wise man should be astonished at any thing in these days—by assuring me that you have lately heard this system eloquently defended by a female philosopher. What can women expect from it but contempt? Next to polygamy, it would prove the most certain method of destroying the domestic happiness of the sex, as well as their influence and respectability in society. But some of the dear creatures love to talk of what they do not understand, and usually show their eloquence to the greatest advantage, by taking the wrong side of a question.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER XXI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

From selfishness to jealousy there is but one step, or rather there is none; for jealousy of a certain sort is but selfishness in another form. How different this passion as I have felt it, and as I see it shown! In some characters it is the symptom of amiable and exquisite sensibility; in others of odious coldness and contraction of heart. In some of our sex it is, you know, my Gabrielle, a delicate fear, a tender anxiety, a proof of ardent passion; in others it is a mere love of power, a disgusting struggle for the property of a heart, an absurd assertion of rights and prerogatives. Surely no prejudice of education or institution can be more barbarous than that which teaches a wife that she has an indefeasible and exclusive right both to the affections and the fidelity of her husband. I am astonished to hear it avowed by any woman who has the slightest pretensions to delicacy of sentiment, or liberality of mind. I should expect to find this vulgar prejudice only among the downright dames, who talk of *my good man*, and lay a particular emphasis on the possessive pronoun *my*; who understand literally, and expect that their spouses should adhere punctually to every coarse article of our strange marriage vow.

In certain points of view, my Gabrielle, jealousy is undoubtedly the strongest proof of an indelicate mind. Yet, if I mistake not, the delicate, the divine Leonora is liable to this terrestrial passion. Yesterday evening, as I was returning from a *stroll* in the park with Mr. L——, we met Leonora; and methought she looked embarrassed at meeting us. Heaven knows there was not the slightest occasion for embarrassment, and I could not avoid being surprised at such weakness, I had almost said folly, in a woman of Leonora's sense, especially as she knows how my heart is attached. In the first moments of our intimacy my confidence was unbounded as it ever is in those I love. Aware as I was of the light in which the prejudices of her education and her country make her view such connexions, yet I scrupled

not, with the utmost candour, to confess the unfortunate attachment which had ruled my destiny. After this confidence, do not suspicion and jealousy on her part appear strange? Were Mr. L—— and I shut up for life in the same prison, were we left together upon a desert island, were we alone in the universe, I could never think of him. And Leonora does not see this! How the passions obscure and degrade the finest understandings! But perhaps I do her injustice, and she felt nothing of what her countenance expressed. It is certain, however, that she was silent for some moments after she joined us, from what cause she knows best—so was Mr. L——, I suppose from English awkwardness—so was I, from pure astonishment. At length, in pity of Leonora, I broke the silence. I had recourse to the beauties of nature.

"What a heavenly evening!" said I. "We have been listening to the song of the birds, enjoying this fresh breeze of nature's perfumes." Leonora said something about the superiority of nature's perfumes to those of art; and observed, "how much more agreeable the smell of flowers appears in the open air than in confined rooms." While she spoke she looked at her husband, as she continually does, for assent and approbation. He assented, but apparently without knowing what he was saying; and only by one of his English monosyllables. I alone was at ease.

"Can any thing be more beautiful," continued I, looking back, "than the soft mellow foliage of those woods, and the exquisite tints of their rich colouring? What delicious melancholy such an evening spreads over the heart!—what reflections!—what recollections! —O Leonora, look at the lights upon that mountain, and the deep shadows upon the lake below. Just such scenes have I admired, by such have I been entranced in Switzerland."

Leonora put her arm within mine—she seemed to have no objection to my thoughts going back to Switzerland—I sighed—she pressed my hand affectionately —I wiped the starting tear from my eye. Mr. L—— looked at me with something like surprise while I repeated involuntarily,

> "I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you,
> For morn is approaching your charms to restore,
> Perfum'd with fresh fragrance, and glitt'ring with dew."

I paused, recollecting myself, struck with *the ridicule* of repeating verses, and of indulging feelings in which no one perhaps sympathized.

"Those are beautiful lines," said Leonora: "that poem has always been a favourite of mine."

"And of mine, also," said Mr. L——.

"I prefer Beattie's Hermit to all other hermits," said Leonora.

I was not in a mood calmly to discuss with her a point of criticism—I walked on in revery: but in this I was not allowed to indulge. Mr. L—— asked if I could not recollect some more of the Hermit—I pleaded the worst memory in the world—a memory that can never recollect any poem perfectly by rote, only the touches of genius or sensibility that strike me—and those are so few!

"But in this poem there are so many," said Leonora. I am sure she insisted only to please her husband, and pleaded against her real feelings purposely to conceal them. He persisted in his request, with more warmth than usual. I was compelled to rouse myself from my revery, and to call back my distant thoughts. I repeated all that I could recollect of the poem. Mr. L—— paid me a profusion of compliments upon the sweetness of my voice, and my taste in reciting. He was pleased to find that my manner and tones gave an Italian expression to English poetry, which to him was a peculiar charm. It reminded him of some signora, whom he had known at Florence. This was the first time I had learned that he had been abroad. I was going to explore the foreign field of conversation which he thus opened; but just at that moment Leonora withdrew her arm from mine, and I fancied that she coloured. This might be only my fancy, or the natural effect of her stooping to gather a flower. We were now within sight of the castle. I pointed to one of the turrets over a Gothic window, upon which the gleams of the setting sun produced a picturesque effect; my glove happened to be off, and Leonora unluckily saw that her husband's eyes were fixed upon my arm, instead of the turret to which I was pointing. 'Twas a trifle which I never should have noticed, had she not forced it upon my attention. She actually turned pale. I had the presence of mind not to put on my glove.

I must observe more accurately; I must decide

whether this angelic Leonora is or is not susceptible of the mortal passion ycleped jealousy. I confess my curiosity is awakened.

Adieu, my ever amiable Gabrielle.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

WHEN the passions are asleep we are apt to fancy they are dead. I verily thought that curiosity was dead within me, it had lain so long dormant while stronger and tenderer sentiments waked in full activity; but now that absence and distance from their object lull them to temporary repose, the vulgar subordinate passions are roused, and take their turn to reign. My curiosity was so strongly excited upon the subject of Leonora's jealousy, that I could not rest, without attempting to obtain satisfaction. Blame me not, dearest Gabrielle, for in my situation you would inevitably have done the same, only that you would have done it with more address; with that peculiar, inimitable address, which I envy above all your accomplishments. But address is a delicate native of France, and though it may now and then exist as a stranger, I doubt whether it can ever be naturalized in our rude climate. All the attempts I have made are, however, encouraging enough—you shall judge. My object was, to ascertain the existence or non-existence of Leonora's jealousy. I set about it with a tolerably careless assurance, and followed up the hint, which accident had thrown out for my ingenuity to work upon. You remember, or at least I remember, that Leonora withdrew her arm from mine, and stooped to gather a flower at the moment when her husband mentioned Florence, and the resemblance of my voice to that of some Italian charmer. The next day I happened to play some of my sweetest Italian airs, and to accompany them with my voice. The music-room opens into the great hall: Leonora and her husband were in the hall, talking to some visiters. The voices were soon hushed, as I expected, by the magic sounds, but, what I did not expect, Leonora was the first who led the way into the music-room. Was this affectation? These

simple characters sometimes baffle all the art of the decipherer. I should have been clear that it was affectation, had Leonora been prodigal of compliments on my performance; but she seemed only to listen for her own pleasure, and left it to Mr. L—— to applaud. While I was preparing to play over again the air which pleased him most, the two little nephews came running to beg Leonora would follow them to look at some trifle, some coloured shadow, upon the garden-wall, I think they said: she let them lead her off, leaving *us* together. This did not seem like jealousy. I was more at a loss than ever, and determined to make fresh and more decisive experiments. Curiosity, you know, is heightened by doubt. To cure myself of curiosity it is necessary therefore to put my mind out of doubt. Admire the practical application of metaphysics! But metaphysics always makes you yawn. Adieu for to-day.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXIII.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

L—— Castle.

DEAR Margaret, an uncle of mine, who, ever since I can remember, seemed to me cut out for an old bachelor, writes me word that he is just going to be married, and that I must grace his nuptials. I cannot refuse, for he has always been very kind to me, and we have no right to cut people out for old bachelors. That I am sorry to leave Leonora it is superfluous to tell you; but this is the melancholy part of the business, on which I make it a principle to dwell as little as possible.

Lady Olivia must be heartily glad that I am going, for I have been terribly troublesome to her by my gayety and my *simplicity*. I shall lose all the pleasure I had promised myself in seeing the *dénouement* of the comedy of *The Sentimental Coquette*, or, *The Heroine Unmasked*.

I made Leonora almost angry with me this morning, by a hint or two I gave upon this subject. She looked so very grave that I was afraid of my own thoughts, and I dared not explain myself further. Intimate as I am with her, there are points on which I am sure that she would never make me her confidante. I think that she

has not been in her usual good spirits lately; and though she treats Olivia with uniform kindness, and betrays not, even to my watchful eyes, the slightest symptom of jealousy, yet I suspect that she sees what is going forward, and she suffers in secret. Now if she would let me explain myself, I could set her heart at ease, by the assurance that Mr. L—— is only acting a part. If her affection for her husband did not almost blind her, she would have as much penetration as I have—which you will allow, my dear Margaret, is saying a great deal.

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XXIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

CONGRATULATE me, my charming Gabrielle, upon being delivered from the unfeeling gayety of that friend of Leonora, that Helen of whom I formerly sent you a too flattering portrait. Her departure relieves me from many painful sensations. Dissonance to a musical ear is not more horrid than want of harmony between characters to the soul of sensibility. Between Helen and me there was a perpetual discord of ideas and sentiments, which fatigued me inexpressibly. Besides, I began to consider her as a spy upon my actions. But there, I believe, I did her injustice; for she was too much occupied with her own trifling thoughts to have any alarming powers of observation.

Since her departure we have been very gay. Yesterday we had a large company at dinner; some of the neighbouring families, whom I expected to find mere country visiters, that were come a dozen miles to show their antediluvian finery, retire half an hour after dinner, spoil coffee with cream, say nothing, but at their appointed hours rise, ring for their superb carriages, and go home by moonlight. However, to my astonishment, I found myself in a society of well-bred, well-informed persons; the women ready to converse, and the men, even after dinner, not impatient to get rid of them. Two or three of the company had travelled, and I was glad to talk to them of Italy, Switzerland, and France.

Mr. L—— I knew would join in this conversation. I discovered that he came to Florence just as I was leaving it. I was to have been at our ambassador's one evening when he was there ; but a headache prevented me. These little coincidences, you know, my Gabrielle, draw people closer together. I remember to have heard of a Mr. L—— at Florence, who was a passionate admirer of our sex. He was then unmarried. I little thought that this was the same person. Beneath a cold exterior these Englishmen often conceal a wondrous quantity of enthusiasm—volcanoes under snow. Curiosity, dear, indefatigable curiosity, supported me through the labour of clearing away the snow, and I came to indubitable traces of unextinguished and unextinguishable fire. The character of L—— is quite different from what I had imagined it to be. It is *an excellent study*. We had a long and interesting conversation upon national manners, especially upon those of the females of all nations. He concluded by quoting the words of your friend M. le Vicomte de Segur,—" If I were permitted to choose, I should prefer a French woman for my friend, an English woman for my wife, and a Polish lady for my mistress."

From this, it seems that I am mistaken about the Italian signora, or else Mr. L—— has an enlarged charity for the graces of all nations. More subject for curiosity.

In the evening, before the company separated, we were standing on the steps of the great hall, looking at a fine effect of moonlight, and I pointed out the shadow of the arches of a bridge. From moonlight we went on to lamplight, and many pretty things were said about art and nature. A gentleman, who had just returned from Paris, talked of the reflection of the lamps in the Seine, which one sees in crossing the Pont-Royal, and which, as he said, appear like a colonnade of fire. As soon as he had finished *prosing* about his colonnade, I turned to Mr. L——, and asked if he remembered the account which Coxe, the traveller, gives of the Polish Princess Czartoryski's charming *fête champêtre* and the illuminated rustic bridge of one arch, the reflection of which in the water was so strong as to deceive the eye, and to give the whole the appearance of a brilliant circle suspended in the air. Mr. L—— seemed enchanted with my description, and eagerly said that he would some night have a bridge in his improvements illuminated,

that *we* (half-gallant Englishman!) might see the effect. I carelessly replied, that probably it would have a good effect: I would then have talked on other subjects to the lady next me: but an Englishman cannot suddenly change the course of his conversation. Mr. L—— still persisted in asking a variety of questions about this Polish fête. I excused myself; for if you satisfy curiosity you are no longer sublime; besides, it is so pedantic to remember *accurately* any thing one meets with in books. I assured him that I had forgotten the particulars.

My countrymen are wondrous persevering, when once roused. This morning, when I came down to breakfast, I found Mr. L—— with a volume of Coxe's Travels in his hand. He read aloud to Leonora the whole description of the illuminated gardens, and of a Turkish tent of curious workmanship, and of a pavilion supported by pillars ornamented with wreaths of flowers. Leonora's birthday is some time in the next month; and her husband, probably to prevent any disagreeable little feelings, proposed that the *fête champêtre* he designed to give should be on that day. She seemed rather to discourage the thing. Now to what should this indifference be attributed? To jealousy I should positively decide, but that two reasons oppose this idea, and keep me in doubt. She was not within hearing at the moonlight conference, and knew nothing of my having mentioned the Polish fête, or of her husband's having proposed to illuminate the bridge for me. Besides, I remember, the other day when she was reading the new French novel you sent me, she expressed great dislike to the sentimental fêtes which the lover prepares for his mistress. I would give more than I dare tell you, my dear Gabrielle, to be able to decide whether she is jealous of me or not. But where was I?—Mr. L——, who had set his heart upon the *fête champêtre*, persisted, and combated her antipathy by reason. Foolish man! he should have tried compliments, or caresses—if I had not been present.

"My dear Leonora," said he, "I think you carry your dislike to these things too far. They are more according to the French than to the English taste, I know; but we should not be influenced by national prejudice. I detest the ostentation and the affectation of sentiment as much as you can; but where the real feeling exists,

every mode of showing kindness is agreeable. You must let us have this little fête on your birthday. Besides the pleasure it will give me, I really think it is useful to mix ideas of affection with amusement."

She smiled most graciously, and replied, that she would with pleasure accept of kindness in any form from him. In short, she was willing to have the fête, when it was clearly explained that she was to be the object of it. Is not this proof positive of jealousy? And yet my curiosity is not thoroughly satisfied. I must go on; for Leonora's sake I must go on. When I have been assured of the truth I shall know how to conduct myself; and you, who know my heart, will do me the justice to believe, that when I am convinced of my friend's weakness, I shall spare it with the most delicate caution: but till I am convinced, I am in perpetual danger of blundering by my careless, inadvertent innocence. You smile, Gabrielle; dear malicious Gabrielle, even in your malice you are charming! Adieu! Pray for the speedy extinction of my curiosity.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXV.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

You say, my dearest mother, that of late my letters have been more constrained and less cheerful than usual, and you conjure me not to conceal from you any thing which may concern my happiness. I have ever found you my best and most indulgent friend, and there is not a thought or feeling of my mind, however weak or foolish, that I desire to conceal from you. No one in this world is more—is so much interested in my happiness; and in every doubtful situation I have always been accustomed to apply to your unerring judgment for assistance. Your strength of mind, your enlightened affection, would support and direct me, would at once show me how I ought to act, and inspire me with courage and fortitude sufficient to be worthy of your esteem, and of my own. At no period of my life, not even when my heart first felt the confused sensations of a passion that was new to it, did I ever want or wish for a friend so much as at this instant: and yet I hesitate whether I

ought to ask even your advice, whether I ought to indulge myself in speaking of my feelings even to my mother. I refrained from giving the slightest intimation of them to my dear Helen, though she often led to this subject, and seemed vexed by my reserve. I thought it not right to accept of her sympathy. From her kindness I had every consolation to expect, but no assistance from her counsels, because she does not understand Mr. L——'s character, and I could plainly perceive that she had an erroneous idea so fixed in her fancy, as to prevent her seeing things in their true light. I am afraid of imputing blame where I most wish to avoid it: I fear to excite unjust suspicions; I dread that if I say the whole you will imagine that I mean much more than I say.

I have not been quite well lately, and my mind probably is more apt to be alarmed than it would be if my health were stronger. All that I apprehend may exist merely in my own distempered imagination. Do not then suppose others are to blame, when perhaps I only am in fault. I have for some time past been dissatisfied with myself, and have had reason to be so: I do not say this from any false humility; I despise that affectation; but I say it with a sincere desire that you may assist me to cure myself of a weakness which, if it were to grow upon my mind, must render me miserable, and might destroy the happiness of the person I love best upon earth. You know that I am not naturally or habitually of a suspicious temper, but I am conscious of having lately felt a disposition to jealousy. I have been spoiled by the excessive attention which my husband paid to me in the first year of our marriage.

You warned me not to fancy that he could continue always a lover. I did not, at least I tried not to expect such an impossibility. I was prepared for the change, at least I thought I was: yet now the time, the inevitable time is come, and I have not the fortitude to bear it as I ought. If I had never known what it was to possess his love, I might perhaps be content with his friendship. If I could feel only friendship for him, I should now, possibly, be happy. I know that I have the first place in his esteem: I do believe—I should be miserable indeed if I did not believe—that I have the first place in his affection. But this affection is certainly different from what it once was. I wish I could forget

the difference. No: I retract that wish; however painful the comparison, the recollection of times that are past is delightful to my heart. Yet, my dear mother, if such times are never to return, it would be better for me to forget that they have ever been. It would be wiser not to let my imagination recur to the past, which could then tend only to render me discontented with the present and with the future. The FUTURE! how melancholy that word sounds to me! What a dreary length of prospect it brings to my view! How young I am, how many years may I have to live, and how little motive have I left in life! Those which used to act most forcibly upon me have now scarcely power to move my mind. The sense of duty, it is true, raises me to some degree of exertion; I hope that I do not neglect the education of the two children whom my poor sister bequeathed to my care. When my mind was at ease they were my delight; but now I feel that I am rather interrupted than interested by their childish gayety and amusements.

I am afraid that I am growing selfish, and I am sure that I have become shamefully indolent. I go on with certain occupations every day from habit, not from choice; my mind is not in them. I used to flatter myself that I did many things from a sense of duty and of general benevolence, which I am convinced were done merely from a particular wish to please, and to make myself more and more beloved by the object of my fondest affection. Disappointed in this hope, I sink into indolence, from which the desire to entertain my friends is not sufficient to rouse me. Helen has been summoned away; but I believe I told you that Mr. and Mrs. F**, whose company is peculiarly agreeable to my taste, and Lady M***** and her amiable daughters, and your witty friend *****, are with us. In such society I am ashamed of being stupid; yet I cannot contribute to the amusement of the company, and I feel surprised at their animation and sprightliness. It seems as if I was looking on at dances without hearing any music. Sometimes I fear that my silence should be observed, and then I begin to talk without well knowing what I am saying. I confine myself to the most commonplace subjects, and hesitate, from the dread of saying something quite foreign to the purpose. What must Mr. L—— think of my stupidity? But he does not, I believe, perceive

it: he is so much occupied with—with other objects. I am glad that he does not see all that passes in my mind, for he might despise me if he knew that I am so miserable. I did not mean to use so strong an expression; but now it is written, I will not blot it out, lest you should fancy something worse than the reality. I am not, however, yet so weak as to be seriously *miserable* when I have no real cause to be so. The truth is—now you know this phrase is a tacit confession that all that has been said before is false. The real truth is—by my prefacing so long you may be sure that I have reason to be ashamed of this real truth's coming out. The real truth is, that I have been so long accustomed to be the first and *only* object of Mr. L——'s thoughts, that I cannot bear to see him think of any thing else. Yes, *things* I can bear, but not *persons*—female persons; and there is one person here who is so much more agreeable and entertaining than I am, that she engrosses very naturally almost all his attention. I am not *envious*, I am sure; for I could once admire all Lady Olivia's talents and accomplishments, and no one could be more charmed than I was with her fascinating manners and irresistible powers of pleasing; but when those irresistible powers may rob me of the heart of my beloved husband—of the whole happiness of my life—how can I admire them? All I can promise is to preserve my mind from the meanness of suspicion. I can do my rival justice. I can believe, and entreat you to believe, that she does not wish to be my rival: that she is perfectly innocent of all design to injure me, and that she is not aware of the impression she has made. I, who know every change of Mr. L——'s countenance, every inflexion of his voice, every turn of his mind, can see too plainly what she cannot discern. I should indeed have thought, that no woman, whom he distinguished or preferred in any degree, could avoid perceiving it, his manner is so expressive, so flattering; but perhaps this appears so only to me—a woman who does not love him may see things very differently. Lady Olivia can be in no danger, because her heart, fortunately for me, is prepossessed in favour of another; and a woman whose heart is occupied by one object is absolutely blind, as I well know, to all others. With this security I ought to be satisfied; for I believe no one inspires a lasting passion without sharing it.

I am summoned to give my opinion about certain illuminations and decorations for a *fête champêtre* which Mr. L—— is so kind as to give in honour of my birth-day—just at the time I am complaining of his neglect! —No, dear mother, I hope I have not complained of *him*, but of *myself:* and it is your business to teach your daughter to be more reasonable. Write soon and fully to

Your affectionate

LEONORA.

LETTER XXVI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

THIS fine fête champêtre is over. Expect no description of it from me, Gabrielle, for I am horribly out of humour. The whole pleasure of the evening was destroyed by the most foolish circumstance imaginable. Leonora's jealousy is now evident to more eyes than mine. No further doubt upon the subject can remain. My curiosity is satisfied; but I am now left to reproach myself for having gone so far to ascertain what I ought to have taken for granted. All these good English wives are jealous; so jealous, that no one, who has any pretensions to beauty, wit, or *amiability* can live with them. They can have no *society*, in our sense of the word; of course they must live shut up in their own dismal houses with their own stupid families, the faithful husband and wife sitting opposite to each other in their own chimney corners, yawning models of constancy. And this they call virtue! How the meanest vices usurp the name of virtue! Leonora's is a jealousy of the most illiberal and degrading species; a jealousy of the temper, not of the heart. She is too cold to feel the passion of love. She never could be in love; of that I am certain. She is too reasonable, too prudish. Besides, to imagine that she could be in love with her own husband, and after eighteen months' marriage—the thing is absurd! the thing is impossible! No, she deceives herself or him, or both, if she pretends that her jealousy arises from love, from what you and I, Gabrielle, understand by the word. Passion, and passion only, can plead a just

excuse for its own excesses. Were Leonora in love, I could pardon her jealousy. But now I despise it. Yes, with all her high reputation, and *imposing* qualities, I must think of her with contempt. And now that I have given vent to my feelings with that freedom in which I ever indulge myself in writing to you, my amiable Gabrielle, chosen friend of my heart, I will compose myself, and give you a rational account of things.

You know that I am said to have some taste. Leonora makes no pretensions to any. Wishing, I suppose, that her fête should be as elegant as possible, she consulted me about all the arrangements and decorations. It was I that did every thing. My skill and taste were admired by the whole company, and especially by Mr. L——. He was in remarkably good spirits at the commencement of the evening; quite gay and gallant: he certainly paid me a great deal of attention, and it was natural he should; for besides being his guest, I was undoubtedly the most elegant woman present. My fame had gone abroad; I found that I was the object of general attention. To this I have been tolerably well accustomed all my life; enough at least to prevent me from giving any visible sign of being moved by admiration in whatever form it comes; whether in the polite foreign glance, or the broad English stare. The starers enjoyed their pleasure, and I mine: I moved and talked, I smiled or was pensive, as though I saw them not; nevertheless the homage of their gaze was not lost upon me. You know, my charming Gabrielle, one likes to observe the *sensation* one produces among new people. The incense that I perceived in the surrounding atmosphere was just powerful enough to affect my nerves agreeably: that languor which you have so often reproached me for indulging in the company of what we call *indifferents* gradually dissipated! and, as poor R*** used to say of me, I came from behind my cloud like the sun in all its glory. I was such as you have seen me, Gabrielle, in my best days, in my best moments, in my very best style. I wonder what would excite me to such a waste of powers. L—— seemed inspired too: he really was quite agreeable, and showed me off almost as well as R*** himself could have done. I had no idea that he had this species of talent. You will never know of what my countrymen are capable, for you are out of patience with the statues the first half-hour: now it takes

an amazing time to animate them; but they can be waked into life, and I have a pride in conquering difficulties. There were more men this night in proportion to the women than one usually sees in English company; consequently it was more agreeable. I was surrounded by an admiring audience, and my conversation of course was sufficiently general to please all, and sufficiently particular to distinguish the man whom I wished to animate. In all this you will say there was nothing to put one out of humour, nothing very mortifying: but stay, my fair philosopher, do not judge of the day till you see its end. Leonora was so hid from my view by the crowd of adorers, that I really did not discern her, or suspect her jealousy. I was quite natural; I thought only of myself; I declined all invitations to dance, declaring that it was so long since I had tried an English country dance, that I dared not expose my awkwardness. French country dances were mentioned, but I preferred conversation. At last L—— persecuted me to try a Polish dance with him,—a multitude of voices overpowered me. I have not the talent, which some of my countrywomen possess in such perfection, of being obstinate about trifles. When I can refuse with grace, 'tis well; but when that is no longer possible, it is my principle, or my weakness, to yield. I was surprised to find that L—— danced admirably. I became animated. You know how dancing animates me, when I have a partner who *can* dance—a thing not very common in this country. We ended by *waltzing*, first in the Polish, and afterward in the Parisian manner. I certainly surpassed myself—I flew, I was borne upon the wings of the wind, I floated on the notes of the music. Animated or languid in every gradation of grace and sentiment, I abandoned myself to the inspiration of the moment; I was all soul, and the spectators were all admiration. To you, my Gabrielle, I may speak thus of myself without vanity: you know the sensation I was accustomed to produce at Paris; you may guess then what the effect must be here, where such a style of dancing has all the captivation of novelty. Had I doubted that my *success* was complete, I should have been assured of it by the faces of some prudes among the matrons, who affected to think that the waltz was *too much*. As L—— was leading, or rather supporting, me to my seat, for I was quite exhausted, I overheard a gentleman, who was at no

great distance from the place where Leonora was standing whisper to his neighbour, "Le Valse extrême est la volupté permise." I fancy Leonora overheard these words, as well as myself, for my eyes met hers at this instant, and she coloured, and directly looked another way. L—— neither heard nor saw any thing of all this: he was intent upon procuring me a seat; and an Englishman can never see or think of two things at a time. A few minutes afterward, while he was fanning me, a young awkward peasant-girl, quite a stranger in this country, came up to me, and dropping her novice courtesy, said,

"Here's a ring, my lady, I found on the grass; they tell me it is yours, my lady!"

"No, my good girl, it is not mine," said I.

"It is Lady Leonora's," said Mr. L——.

At the sound of her name Leonora came forward.

The girl looked alternately at us.

"Can you doubt," cried Colonel A——, "which of these ladies is Mr. L——'s wife?"

"O no, sir; this is she, *to be sure*," said the girl, pointing to me.

What there was in the girl's accent, or in L——'s look, when she pronounced the words, or in mine, or in all three together, I cannot exactly describe; but Leonora felt it. She turned as pale as death. I looked as unconscious as I could. L—— went on fanning me, without seeing his wife's change of countenance. Leonora—would you believe it?—sank upon a bench behind us, and fainted. How her husband started, when he felt her catch by his arm as she fell! He threw down the fan, left me, ran for water—"O, Lady Leonora! Lady Leonora is ill!" exclaimed every voice. The consternation was wonderful. They carried her ladyship to a spot where she could have free air. I was absolutely in an instant left alone, and seemingly as much forgotten as if I had never existed! I was indeed so much astonished that I could not stir from the place where I stood: till recollecting myself, I pushed my way through the crowd, and came in view of Leonora just as she opened her eyes. As soon as she came to herself, she made an effort to stand, saying that she was quite well again but that she would go into the house and repose herself for a few minutes. As she rose, a hundred arms were offered at once to her assistance. She stepped forward

and to my surprise, and I believe to the surprise of everybody else, took mine, made a sign to her husband not to follow us, and walked quickly towards the house. Her woman, with a face of terror, met us, as we were going into Lady Leonora's apartment, with salts and hartshorn, and I know not what, in her hands.

"I am quite well, quite well again; I do not want any thing; I do not want any thing. I do not want you, Mason," said Leonora. "Lady Olivia is so good as to assist me. I am come in only to rest for a few minutes."

The woman gave me an evil look, and left the room. Never did I wish any thing more than that she should have staid. I was absolutely so embarrassed, so distressed, when I found myself alone with Leonora, that I knew not what to say. I believe I began with a sentence about the night air, that was very little to the purpose. The sight of some baby-linen which the maid had been making suggested to me something which I thought more appropriate.

"My dear creature!" said I, "why will you fatigue yourself so terribly, and stand so much and so long, in your situation?"

Leonora neither accepted nor rejected my interpretation of what had passed. She made no reply; but fixed her eyes upon me as if she would have read my very soul. Never did I see or feel eyes so expressive or so powerful as hers were at this moment. Mine absolutely fell beneath them. What deprived me of presence of mind I know not; but I was utterly without common sense. I am sure I changed colour, and Leonora must have seen it through my rouge, for I had only the slightest tinge upon my cheeks. The consciousness that she saw me blush disconcerted me beyond recovery; it is really quite unaccountable: I trembled all over as I stood before her; I was forced to have recourse to the hartshorn and water, which stood upon the table. Leonora rose and threw open the window to give me fresh air. She pressed my hand, but rather with an air of forgiveness than of affection; I was mortified and vexed; but my pride revived me.

"We had better return to the company as soon as possible, I believe," said she, looking down at the moving crowd below.

"I am ready to attend you, my dear," said I, coldly

"whenever you feel yourself sufficiently rested and composed."

She left the room, and I followed. You have no idea of the solicitude with which the people hoped she was *better*—and *well*—and *quite well*, &c. What amazing importance a fainting fit can sometimes bestow! Her husband seemed no longer to have any eyes or soul but for her. At supper, and during the rest of the night, she occupied the whole attention of everybody present. Can you conceive any thing so provoking? But L—— must be an absolute fool! Did he never see a woman faint before? He cannot pretend to be in love with his wife—I do not understand it. But this I know, that he has been totally different in his manner towards me these three days past.

And now that my curiosity is satisfied about Leonora's jealousy, I shall absolutely perish with ennui in this stupid place. Adieu, dearest Gabrielle! How I envy you! The void of my heart is insupportable. I must have some passion to keep me alive. Forward any letters from poor R***, if he has written under cover to you.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXVII.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

TAKE courage, my beloved daughter; take courage. Have a just confidence in yourself and in your husband. For a moment he may be fascinated by the arts of an unprincipled woman; for a moment she may triumph over his senses and his imagination; but of his esteem, his affection, his heart, she cannot rob you. These have been, ought to be, will be yours. Trust to your mother's prophecy, my child. You may trust to it securely: for, well as she loves you—and no mother ever loved a daughter better—she does not sooth you with mere words of doting fondness; she speaks to you the language of reason and of truth.

I know what such a man as Mr. L—— must esteem and love; I know of what such a woman as my daughter is capable, when her whole happiness, and the happiness of all that is dear to her, are at stake. The loss of tem-

porary admiration and power, the transient preference shown to a despicable rival, will not provoke you to imprudent reproach, nor sink you to helpless despair. The arts of an Olivia might continue to deceive your husband, if he were a fool; or to please him, if he were a libertine: but he has a heart formed for love, he cannot therefore be a libertine: he is a man of superior abilities, and knows women too well to be a dupe. With a penetrating and discriminative judgment of character, he is a nice observer of female manners; his taste is delicate even to excess; under a cold exterior he has a vivid imagination and strong sensibility; he has little vanity, but a superabundance of pride; he wishes to be ardently loved, but this he conceals; it is difficult to convince him that he is beloved, and scarcely possible to satisfy him by any common proofs of attachment. A coquette will never attach Mr. L——. The admiration which others might express for her charms and accomplishments would never pique him to competition: far from seeking "to win her praise whom all admire," he would disdain to enter the lists with the vulgar multitude: a heart in which he had a probability of holding only divided empire would not appear to him worth the winning. As a coquette, whatever may be her talents, graces, accomplishments, and address, you have nothing seriously to fear from Lady Olivia.

But, my dear, Mr. L——'s mind may be in a situation to require amusement. That species of apathy which succeeds to passion is not, as the inexperienced imagine, the death of love, but the necessary and salutary repose from which it awakens refreshed and revived. Mr. L——'s passion for you has been not only tender, but violent, and the calm which inevitably succeeds should not alarm you.

When a man feels that his fondness for a wife is suspended, he is uneasy in her company, not only from the sense of decreased pleasure, but from the fear of her observation and detection. If she reproach him, affairs become worse; he blames himself, he fears to give pain whenever he is in her presence: if he attempt to conceal his feelings, and to appear what he is no longer—a lover, his attempts are awkward; he becomes more and more dissatisfied with himself; and the person who compels him to this hypocrisy, who thus degrades him in his own eyes, must certainly be in danger of becoming

an object of aversion. A wife who has sense enough to abstain from all reproaches, direct or indirect, by word or look, may reclaim her husband's affections: the bird escapes from his cage, but returns to his nest.

I am glad that you have agreeable company at your house; they will amuse Mr. L——, and relieve you from the necessity of taking a share in any conversation that you dislike. Our witty friend ***** will supply your share of conversation; and as to your silence, remember that witty people are always content with those who *act audience.*

I rejoice that you persist in your daily occupations. To a mind like yours, the sense of performing your duty will, next to religion, be the firmest support upon which you can rely.

Perhaps, my dear, even when you read this, you will still be inclined to justify Lady Olivia, and to conceal from your heart the suspicions which her conduct excites. I am not surprised that you should find it difficult to believe that one to whom you have behaved so generously should treat you with treachery and ingratitude. I am not surprised that you, who feel what it is to love, should think that a woman whose heart is occupied by attachment to one object must be incapable of thinking of any other. But love in such a heart as yours is totally different from what it is in the fancy of these heroines. In their imagination the objects are as fleeting as the pictures in the clouds chased by the wind.

From Lady Olivia expect nothing: depend only on yourself. When you become, as you soon must, completely convinced that the woman in whom your unsuspecting soul confided is utterly unworthy of your esteem, refrain from all imprudent expressions of indignation. I despise—you will soon hate—your rival; but in the moment of detection, think of what is due to yourself, and act as calmly as if you had never loved her. She will suffer no pain from the loss of your friendship: she has not a heart that can value it. Probably she is envious of you. All these women desire to mortify those whom they cannot degrade to their own level: and I am inclined to suspect that this malevolent feeling, joined to the want of occupation, may be the cause of her present conduct. Her manœuvres will not ultimately succeed. She will be deserted by Mr. L——, disappointed and disgraced, and your husband will be

more yours than ever. When this happy moment comes, my Leonora,—when your husband returns, preferring yours to all other society, then will be the time to exert all your talents, all your charms, to prove your superiority in every thing, but most in love. The soothings of female tenderness, in certain situations, have power, not only to calm the feelings of self-reproach, but to diffuse delight over the soul of man. The oil, which the skilful mariner throws upon the sea, not only smooths the waves in the storm, but when the sun shines, spreads the most beautiful colours over the surface of the waters.

My dear daughter, though your mother writes seemingly at her ease, you must not fancy that she does not feel for you. Do not imagine, that in the coldness of extinguished passions, and in the pride of counselling age, your mother expects to charm agony with words. No, my child, I am not so absurd, so cruel. Your letter forced tears from eyes which are not used, like sentimental eyes, to weep upon every trifling occasion. My first wish was to set out immediately to see you; but whatever consolation or pleasure my company might afford, I believe it might be disadvantageous to you in your present circumstances. I could not be an hour in the room with this Lady Olivia, without showing some portion of the indignation and contempt that I feel for her conduct. This warmth of mine might injure you in your husband's opinion. Though you would have too strong a sense of propriety, and too much dignity of mind, to make complaints of your husband to me, or to any one living; yet it might be supposed that your mother was your confidante in secret, and your partisan in public: this might destroy your domestic happiness. No husband can or ought to endure the idea of his wife's caballing against him. I admire and shall respect your dignified silence.

And now fare you well, my dearest child. May God bless you! If a mother's prayers could avail, you would be the happiest of human beings. I do, without partiality, believe you to be one of the best and most amiable of women.

LETTER XXVIII.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Had your letter, my dearest mother, reached me a few hours sooner, I should not have exposed myself as I have done.

Yesterday, at our *fête champêtre*, you would have been ashamed of me. I am ashamed of myself. I did the very reverse of what I ought, of what I would have done if I had been fortified by your counsel. Instead of being calm and dignified, I was agitated beyond all power of control. I lost all presence of mind, all common sense, all recollection.

I know your contempt for swooning heroines. What will you say, when you hear that your daughter fainted —fainted in public? I believe, however, that, as soon as I recovered, I had sufficient command over myself to prevent the accident from being attributed to—to—to the real cause, and I hope that the very moment I came to my recollection, my manner towards Lady Olivia was such as to preclude all possibility of her being blamed or even suspected. From living much abroad, she has acquired a certain freedom of manner, and latitude of thinking, which expose her to suspicion; but of all serious intention to injure me, or to pass the bounds of propriety, I totally acquit her. She is not to blame for the admiration she excites, nor is she to be the sufferer for my weakness of mind or of health.

Great and unreasonable folly I am sure I showed—but I shall do so no more.

The particular circumstances I need not explain: you may be assured, that wherever I think it right to be silent, nothing shall tempt me to speak: but I understood, by the conclusion of your letter, that you expect me to preserve an absolute silence upon this subject in future: this I will not promise. I cannot conceive that I, who do not mean to injure any human being, ought, because I am unhappy, and when I am most in want of a friend, to be precluded from the indulgence of speaking of what is nearest my heart to that dear, safe, most enlightened, and honourable of friends, who has loved, guided, instructed, and encouraged me in every thing

that is right from my infancy. Why should I be refused all claim to sympathy? why must my thoughts and feelings be shut up in my own breast? and why must I be an isolated being, prescribed from commerce with my own family, with my beloved mother, to whom I have been accustomed to tell every feeling and idea as they rose? No; to all that is honourable I will strictly conform; but by the superstition of prudence I do not hold myself bound.

Nothing could be kinder than my husband's conduct to me the evening after I was taken ill. He left home early this morning; he is gone to meet his friend General B——, who has just returned from abroad. I hope that Mr. L—— will be absent only a few days; for it would be fatal to my happiness if he should find amusement at a distance from home. His home, at all events, shall never be made a cage to him; when he returns I will exert myself to the utmost to make it agreeable. This I hope can be done without obtruding my company upon him, or putting myself in competition with any person. I could wish that some fortunate accident might induce Lady Olivia to leave us before Mr. L——'s return. Had I the same high opinion of her generosity that I once formed, had I the same perfect confidence in her integrity and in her friendship for me, I would go this moment and tell her all that passes in my heart: no humiliation of my vanity would cost me any thing, if it could serve the interests of my love; no mean pride could stand in my mind against the force of affection. But there is a species of pride which I cannot, will not renounce—believing, as I do, that it is the companion, the friend, the support of virtue. This pride, I trust, will never desert me: it has grown with my growth; it was implanted in my character by the education which my dear mother gave me; and now, even by her it cannot be eradicated. Surely I have misunderstood one passage in your letter: you cannot advise your daughter to restrain just indignation against vice from any motive of policy or personal interest. You say to me, "In the moment of detection think of what is due to yourself, and act as calmly as if you had never loved her." If I *could*, I would not do this. Contempt shown by virtue is the just punishment of vice, a punishment which no selfish consideration should mitigate. If I were convinced that Lady Olivia were guilty, would you have me

behave to her as if I believed her to be innocent? My countenance, my voice, my principles would revolt from such mean and pernicious hypocrisy, degrading to the individual, and destructive to society.

May I never more see the smile of love on the lips of my husband, nor its expression in his eyes, if I do so degrade myself in my own opinion and in his! Yes, in his; for would not he, would not any man of sense or delicacy recur to that idea so common with his sex, and so just, that if a woman will sacrifice her sense of honour to her passions in one instance, she may in another? Would he not argue, "If she will do this for me because she is in love with me, why not for a new favourite, if time or accident should make me less an object of passion?" No; I may lose his love—this would be my misfortune: but to forfeit his esteem would be my fault: and, under the remorse which I should then have to endure, I am persuaded that no power of art or nature could sustain my existence.

So much for myself. As to the general good of society, that, I confess, is not at this moment the uppermost consideration in my mind; but I will add a few words on that subject, lest you should imagine me to be hurried away by my own feelings. Public justice and reason are, I think, on my side. What would become of the good order of society or the decency of families, if every politic wife were to receive or invite, or permit her husband's mistress to reside in her house? What would become of conjugal virtue in either sex, if the wife were in this manner not only to connive at the infidelity of her husband, but to encourage and provide for his inconstancy? If she enters into bonds of amity and articles of partnership with her rival, with that person by whom she has been most injured, instead of being the dignified sufferer, she becomes an object of contempt.

My dearest mother, my most respected friend, my sentiments on this subject cannot essentially differ from yours. I must have mistaken your meaning. Pray write quickly, and tell me so; and forgive, if you cannot approve of, the warmth with which I have spoken.

I am your truly affectionate
And grateful daughter,
LEONORA L——.

LETTER XXIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

My amiable Gabrielle, I must be faithful to my promise of writing to you every week, though this place affords nothing new either in events or sentiment. Mr. L——'s absence made this castle insupportably dull. A few days ago he returned home, and met me with an easy kind of indifference, provoking enough to a woman who has been accustomed to excite some sensation. However, I was rejoiced at this upon Leonora's account. She was evidently delighted, and her spirits and affections seemed to overflow involuntarily upon all around her; even to me her manner became quite frank and cordial, almost caressing. She is really handsome when she is animated, and her conversation this evening quite surprised me. I saw something of that playfulness, those light touches, that versatility of expression, those words that mean more than meet the ear; every thing, in short, that could charm in the most polished foreign society. Leonora seemed to be inspired with all the art of conversation by the simple instinct of affection. What astonished me most was the grace with which she introduced some profound philosophical remarks. "Such pearls," said Mr. L——, "come from the deep."

With all these talents, what might not Leonora be in proper hands! But now she is nothing, except to her husband and a few intimate friends. However, this is not my affair. Let me go on to what concerns myself. You may believe, my dear Gabrielle, that I piqued myself upon showing at least as much easy indifference as was shown to me: freedom encourages freedom. As there was no danger of my being too amiable, I did not think myself bound in honour or sentiment to keep myself in the shade; but I could not be as brilliant as you have seen me at your *soirées:* the magic circle of adorers, the inspiring power of numbers, the eclat of public *representation*, were wanting. I retired to my own apartment at night, quite out of humour with myself; and Josephine, as she undressed me, put me still further out of patience by an ill-timed history of a dispute she has had with Leonora's Swiss servant. The Swiss and

Josephine, it seems, came to high words in defence of their mistresses' charms. Josephine provoked the Swiss by saying, that his lady might possibly be handsome if she were dressed in the French taste; *mais qu'elle étoit bien Angloise*, and would be quite another thing if she had been at Paris The Swiss retorted by observing, that Josephine's lady had indeed learned in perfection at Paris *the art of making herself up*, which was quite necessary to a beauty *un peu passée*. The words were not more agreeable to me than they had been to Josephine. I wonder at her assurance in repeating them—"Un peu passée!" Many a woman in England, ten, fifteen years older than I am, has inspired a violent passion; and it has been observed, that power is retained by these mature charmers longer than conquest can be preserved by inexperienced beauties. There are women who have learned to combine, for their own advantage, and for that of their captives, all the pleasure and *conveniences* of society, all that a thorough knowledge of the world can give—women who have a sufficient attention to appearances, joined to a real contempt of all prejudices, especially that of constancy—women who possess that knowledge of the human heart which well compensates transient bloom; who add the expression of sentiment to beautiful features, and who employ

> "Gay smiles to comfort, April showers to move,
> And all the nature, all the art of love."

—"Un peu passée!" The Swiss is impertinent, and knows nothing of the matter. His master knows but little more. He would, however, know infinitely more if I could take the trouble to instruct him; to which I am almost tempted for want of something better to do. Adieu, my Gabrielle. R***'s silence is perfectly incomprehensible. OLIVIA

LETTER XXX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

So, my amiable Gabrielle, you are really interested in my letters, *though written during my English exile*, and you are curious to know whether any of my *potent spells* can wake into life this man of marble. I candidly con-

fess you would inspire me with an ambition to raise my poor countrymen in your opinion, if I were not restrained by the sacred sentiment of friendship, which forbids me to rival Leonora *even* in a husband's opinion.

However, Josephine, who feels herself a party concerned ever since her battle with the Swiss, has piqued herself upon dressing me with exquisite taste. I am every day *mise à ravir!*—and with such perfection of art that no art appears—all is negligent simplicity. I let Josephine please herself; for you know I am not bound to be frightful because I have a friend whose husband may chance to turn his eye upon my figure, when he is tired of admiring hers. I rallied L — · the other day upon his having no eyes or ears but for his wife. Be assured I did it in such a manner that he could not be angry. Then I went on to a comparison between the *facility* of French and English society. He admitted that there was some truth and more wit in my observations. I was satisfied. With these reasonable men, the grand point for a woman is to amuse them—they can have logic from their own sex. But, my Gabrielle, I am summoned to the *salon*, and must finish my letter another day.

Heaven! can it be a fortnight since I wrote a line to my Gabrielle!—Where was I?—"With these reasonable men the grand point for a woman is to amuse them." True—most true! L——, believing himself only amused with my lively nonsense, indulged himself with it continually. I was to believe only what he believed. Presently he could not do without my conversation for more than two hours together. What was I to do, my Gabrielle? I walked out to avoid him. He found me in the woods—rallied me on my taste for solitude, and quoted Voltaire.

This led to a metaphysical conversation, half-playful, half-serious: the distinction which a man sometimes makes to his conscience between thinking a woman entertaining, and feeling her interesting, vanishes more easily, and more rapidly, than he is aware of—at least in certain situations. This was not an observation I could make to my companion in the woods, and he certainly did not make it for himself. It would have been

vanity in me to have broken off our conversation, lest he should fall in love with me—it would have been blindness not to have seen that he was in some danger. I thought of Leonora—and sighed—and did all that was in my power to put him upon his guard. By way of preservative, I frankly made him a confession of my attachment to R***. This I imagined would put things upon a right footing for ever; but, on the contrary, by convincing him of my innocence, and of my having no designs on his heart, this candour has, I fear, endangered him still more; yet I know not what to think—his manner is so variable towards me—I must be convinced of what his sentiments are before I can decide what my conduct ought to be. Adieu, my amiable Gabrielle; I wait for something decisive with an inexpressible degree of anxiety—I will not now call it curiosity. —Apropos, does R*** wish that I should forget that he exists? What is this business that detains him? But why do I condescend to inquire?

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

London.

MY DEAR L——,

I SEND you the horse to which you took a fancy. He has killed one of his grooms, and lamed two; but you will be his master, and I hope he will know it.

I have a word to say to you on a more serious subject. Pardon me if I tell you that I think you are a happy man, and excuse me if I add, that if you do not keep yourself so I shall not think you a wise one. A good wife is better than a good-for-nothing mistress.—A self-evident proposition!—A stupid truism! Yes; but if every man who knows a self-evident proposition when he sees it on paper always acted as if he knew it, this would be a very wise and a very happy world; and I should not have occasion to write this letter.

You say that you are only amusing yourself at the expense of a finished coquette; take care that she does not presently divert herself at yours.—"*You are proof against French coquetry and German sentiment.*" Granted

—but a fine woman?—and your own vanity?—But you have no vanity.—You call it pride then, I suppose. I will not quarrel with you for a name. Pride, properly managed, will do your business as well as vanity. And no doubt Lady Olivia knows this as well as I do. I hope you may never know it better.

I am, my dear friend,

Truly yours,

J. B.

LETTER XXXII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

Advise me, dearest Gabrielle; I am in a delicate situation; and on your judgment and purity of heart I have the most perfect reliance. Know, then, that I begin to believe that Leonora's jealousy was not so absolutely absurd as I at first supposed. She understood her husband better than I did. I begin to fear that I have made a serious impression while I meant only to amuse myself. Heaven is my witness, I simply intended to satisfy my curiosity, and that once gratified, it was my determination to respect the weakness I discovered. To love Leonora, as once I imagined I could, is out of my power; but to disturb her peace, to destroy her happiness, to make use of the confidence she has reposed in me, the kindness she has shown by making me an inmate of her house—my soul shudders at these ideas. No—if her husband really loves me I will fly. Leonora shall see that Olivia is incapable of treachery—that Olivia has a soul generous and delicate as her own, though free from the prejudices by which she is fettered. To Leonora a husband is a lover—I shall consider him as such, and respect her *property*. You are so little used, my dear Gabrielle, to consider a husband in this point of view, that you will scarcely enter into my feelings: but put yourself in my situation, allow for nationality of principle, and I am persuaded you would act as I shall. Spare me your raillery; seriously, if Leonora's husband is in love with me, would you not advise me, my dearest friend, to fly him, "far as pole from pole?" Write to me, I conjure you, my Gabrielle

—write instantly, and tell me whether R*** is now at Paris. I will return thither immediately if you advise it. My mind is in such confusion, I have no power to decide; I will be guided by your advice.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXIII.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

ADVICE! my charming Olivia! do you ask me for advice? I never gave or took advice in my life, except for *les vapeurs noirs*. And your understanding is so far superior to mine, and you comprehend the characters of these English so much better than I do, that I cannot pretend to counsel you. This Lady Leonora is inconceivable with her passion for her own husband; but how ridiculous to let it be suspected! If her heart is so tender, cannot she, with all her charms, find a lover on whom to bestow it, without tormenting that poor Mr. L——? Evidently he is tired of her: and I am sure I should be worn to death were I in this place. Nothing so tiresome as love without mystery and without obstacles. And this must ever be the case with conjugal love. Eighteen months married, I think you say, and Lady Leonora expects her husband to be still at her feet! And she wishes it! Truly she is the most unreasonable woman upon earth—and the most extraordinary; but I am tired of thinking of what I cannot comprehend.

Let us pass on to Mr. L——. By your last letters I should judge that he might be an agreeable man if his wife were out of the question. Matrimonial jealousy is a new idea to me; I can judge of it only by analogy. In affairs of gallantry I have sometimes seen one of the parties continue to love when the other has become indifferent, and then they go on tormenting one another and being miserable, because they have not the sense to see that a fire cannot be made of ashes. Sometimes I have found romantic young people persuade themselves that they can love no more because they can love one another no longer; but if they had sufficient courage to say—I am tired—and I cannot help it—they would come

to a right understanding immediately, and part on the best terms possible; each eager to make a new choice, and to be again in love and happy. All this to be done with decency, of course. And if there be no scandal, where is the harm? Can it signify to the universe whether Mons. Un-tel likes Mad. Une-telle or Mad. Une-autre? Provided there is love enough, all the world is in good-humour, and that is the essential point; for without good-humour, what becomes of the pleasures of society? As to the rest, I think of inconstancy, or *infidelity* as it is called, much as our good La Fontaine did—"Quand on le sait c'est peu de chose—quand on ne le sait pas ce n'est rien."

To promise to love one person eternally! What a terrible engagement! It freezes my heart even to think of it. I am persuaded, that if I were bound to love him for life, I should detest the most amiable man upon earth in ten minutes—a husband more especially. Good heavens! how I should abhor M. de P——, if I saw him in this point of view. On the contrary, now I love him infinitely—that is to say, as one loves a husband. I have his interest at heart, and his glory. When I thought he was going to prison I was in despair. I was at home to no one but *Brave-et-tendre*, and to him only to consult on the means of obtaining my husband's pardon. M. de P—— is sensible of this, and on my part I have no reason to complain of his liberality. We are perfectly happy, though we meet perhaps but for a few minutes in the day; and is not this better than tiring one another for four-and-twenty hours? When I grow old—if ever I do—he will be my best friend. In the mean time I support his credit with all my influence. This very morning I concluded an affair for him, which never could have succeeded, if the intimate friend of the minister had not been also my lover. Now why cannot your Lady Leonora and her Mr. L—— live on the same sort of terms? But if English manners will not permit of this, I have nothing more to say. Above all things a woman must respect opinion, else she cannot be well received in the world. I conclude this is the secret of Lady Leonora's conduct. But then jealousy!—no woman, I suppose, is bound, even in England, to be jealous in order to show her love for her husband. I lose myself again in trying to understand what is incomprehensible.

As to you, my dear Olivia, you also amaze me by talking of *crimes* and *horror*, and *flying from pole to pole* to avoid a man, because you have made him at last find out that he has a heart! You have done him the greatest possible service: it may preserve him perhaps from hanging himself next November—that month in which, according to Voltaire's philosophical calendar, Englishmen always hang themselves, because the atmosphere is so thick and their ennui so heavy. Lady Leonora, if she really loves her husband, ought to be infinitely obliged to you for averting this danger. As to the rest, your heart is not concerned, so you can have nothing to fear; and as for a platonic attachment on the part of Mr. L——, his wife, even according to her own rigid principles, cannot blame you.

Adieu, my charming friend! Instead of laughing at your fit of prudery, I ought to encourage your scruples, that I might profit by them. If they should bring you to Paris immediately, with what joy should I embrace my Olivia, and how much gratitude should I owe to the jealousy of Lady Leonora L——!

R*** is not yet returned. When I have any news to give you of him, depend upon it you shall hear from me again. Accept, my interesting Olivia, the vows of my most tender and eternal friendship.

GABRIELLE DE P——

LETTER XXXIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle, Tuesday.

YOUR charming letter, my Gabrielle, has at once revived my spirits and dissipated all my scruples; you mistake, however, in supposing that Leonora is in love with her husband: more and more reason have I every hour to be convinced that Leonora has never known the passion of love; consequently, her jealousy was, as I at first pronounced it to be, the selfish jealousy of matrimonial power and property. Else why does it subside, why does it vanish, when, if it were a jealousy of the heart, it has now more provocation, infinitely more than when it appeared in full force? Leonora could see that her husband distinguished me at a *fête champêtre*; she

could see what the eyes of others showed her; she could hear what envy whispered, or what scandal hinted; she was mortified, she was alarmed even to fainting by a public preference, by a silly country girl's mistaking me for *the wife*, and doing homage to me as to the lady of the manor; but Leonora cannot perceive in the object of her affection the symptoms that mark the rise and progress of *a real love*. Leonora feels not the little strokes which would be fatal blows to the peace of a truly delicate mind; she heeds not "the trifles light as air," which would be confirmation strong to a soul of genuine sensibility. My influence over the mind of L—— increases rapidly, and I shall let it rise to its acme before I seem to notice it. Leonora, reassured, I suppose, by a few flattering words, and more perhaps by an exalted opinion of her own merit, has lately appeared quite at her ease, and blind to all that passes before her eyes. It is not for me to dissipate this illusion prematurely—it is not for me to weaken this confidence in her husband. To an English wife this would be death. Let her foolish security then last as long as possible. After all, how much anguish of heart, how many pangs of conscience, how much of the torture of pity, am I spared by this callous temper in my friend! I may indulge in a little harmless coquetry without danger to her peace, and without scruple enjoy the dear possession of power

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"Say, for you know," charming Gabrielle, what is the delight of obtaining power over the human heart? Let the lords of the creation boast of their power to govern all things; to charm these governors be ours. Let the logicians of the earth boast their power to regulate the world by reason; be it ours, Gabrielle, to intoxicate and humble proud reason to the dust beneath our feet. And who shall blame in us this ardour for universal dominion? If they are men, I call them tyrants—if they are women, I call them hypocrites—and the two vices which I most detest are tyranny and hypocrisy. Frankly I confess, that I feel in all its restless activity the passion for general admiration. I cannot conceive—can you, Gabrielle?—a pleasure more transporting than the perception of extended and extending dominion. The struggle of the rebel heart for freedom makes the war more tempting, the victory more

glorious, the triumph more splendid. Secure of your sympathy, ma belle Gabrielle, I shall not fear to tire you by my commentaries.

Male coquetry justifies female retaliation to any imaginable extent. Upon this principle, on which I have seen you act so often, and so successfully, I shall now intrepidly proceed. This man makes a show of resistance; be it at his own peril: he thinks that he is gaining power over my heart, while I am preparing torments for his; he fancies that he is throwing chains around me, while I am riveting fetters from which he will in vain attempt to escape. He is proud, and has the insanity of desiring to be exclusively beloved, yet affects to set no value upon the preference that is shown to him; appears satisfied with his own approbation, and stoically all-sufficient to his own happiness. Leonora does not know how to manage his temper, but I do. The suspense, however, in which he keeps me is tantalizing: he shall pay for it hereafter: I had no idea, till lately, that he had so much self-command. At times he has actually made me doubt my own power. At certain moments I have been half-tempted to believe that I had made no serious impression, that he had been only amusing himself at my expense, and for Leonora's gratification: but upon careful and cool observation I am convinced that his indifference is affected, that all his stoicism will prove vain. The arrow is lodged in his heart, and he must fall, whether he turns upon the enemy in anger, or flies in dismay.

My pride is exasperated. I am not accustomed to such obstinate resistance. I really almost hate this invincible man, and—strange inconsistency of the human heart!—almost love him. Heaven and pride preserve me from such a weakness! But there is certainly something that piques and stimulates one's feelings in this species of male coquetry. L—— understands the business better than I thought he could. One moment my knowledge of the arts of his sex puts me on my guard; the next my sensibility exposes me in the most terrible manner. Experience ought to protect me, but it only shows me the peril, and my inability to escape.

Ah! Gabrielle, without a heart, how safe we should be, how dangerous to our lovers! But, cursed with sensibility, we must, alas! submit to our fate. The habit of loving, *le besoin d'aimer*, is more powerful than all sense of the folly and the danger. Nor is the tempest of the passions so dreadful as the dead calm of the soul. Why did R*** suffer my soul to sink into this ominous calm? The fault is his; let him abide the consequence. Why did he not follow me to England? Why did he not write to me? or, when he did write, why were his letters so cold, so spiritless? When I spoke of divorce, why did he hesitate? Why did he reason when he should have only felt? Tell him, my tender, my delicate friend, these are questions which the heart asks, and which the heart only can answer. Adieu.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXV.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

Je suis excedée! mon cœur. Alive, and but just alive, after such a day of fatigues! All morning from one minister to another! then home to my toilet! then a great dinner with a number of foreigners, each to be distinguished—then au Feydeau, where I was obliged to go to support poor S——'s play. It would be really insupportable, if it were not for the finest music in the world, which, after all, the French music certainly is. There was a violent party against the piece; and we were so late, that it was just on the point of perishing. My ears have not yet recovered from the horrid noise. In the midst of the tumult I happily, by a master-stroke, turned the fortune of the night. I spied the shawl of an English woman hanging over the box. This, you know, like scarlet to the bull, is sufficient to enrage the Parisian pit. To the shawl I directed the fury of the mob of critics. Luckily for us, the lady was attended only by an Englishman, who of course chose to assert his right not to understand the customs of any country, or submit to any will but his own. He would not permit the shawl to be stirred. A bas! à bas: resounded from

below. The uproar was inconceivable. You would have thought that the house must have come down. In the mean time the piece went on, and the shawl covered all its defects. Admire my generalship. T—— tells me I was born for a general; yet I rather think my forte is negotiation.

But I have not yet come to your affairs, for which alone I could undergo the fatigue of writing at this moment. Guess, my Olivia, what apparition I met at the door of my box to-night. But the enclosed note will save you the trouble of guessing. I could not avoid permitting him to slide his billet-doux into my hand as he put on my shawl. Adieu. I must refuse myself the pleasure of conversing longer with my sweet friend. Fresh toils await me. Mad. la Grande will never forgive me if I do not appear for a moment at her soirée: and la petite Q—— will be jealous beyond recovery if I do not give her a moment: and it is Mad. R——'s night. There I must be; for all the ambassadors, as usual, will be there; and as some of them, I have reason to believe, go on purpose to meet me, I cannot disappoint their excellencies. My friends would never forgive it. I am positively quite weary of this life of eternal bustle; but once in the eddy, one is carried round and round; there is no stopping. Adieu, adieu. I write under the hands of Victoire. O that she had your taste to guide her, and to decide my too vacillating judgment: we should then have no occasion to dread even the elegant simplicity of Mad. R——'s toilet.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER XXXVI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

My Gabrielle, I have read R***'s note enclosed in your charming sprightly letter. What a contrast! So cold! so formal! A thousand times rather would I not have heard from him, than have received a letter so little in unison with my feelings. He talks to me of business. Business! What business ought to detain a man a moment from the woman he loves? The interests of his ambition are nothing to me. What are all these to love? Is he so mean as to hesitate between them?

then I despise him! and Olivia can never love the being she despises!

Does R*** flatter himself that his power over my heart is omnipotent? Does he imagine that Olivia is to be slighted with impunity? Does R*** think that a woman who has even nominally the honour to reign over his heart cannot meditate new conquests? O credulous vanity of man! He fancies perhaps that he is secure of the maturer age of one who fondly devoted to him her inexperienced youth. "Security is the curse of fools." Does he in his wisdom deem a woman's age a sufficient pledge for her constancy? He might every day see examples enough to convince him of his error. In fact, the age of women has nothing to do with the number of their years. Possibly, however, the gallant gentleman may be of opinion with Leonora's Swiss, that Lady Olivia is *un peu passée*. Adieu, my dear friend; you, who always understand and sympathize in my feelings, you will express them for me in the best manner possible. I shall not write to R***. You will see him; and Olivia commits to you what to a woman of delicacy is more dear than her love—her just resentment.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXVII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

PITY me, dearest Gabrielle, for I am in need of all the pity which your susceptible heart can bestow. Never was woman in such a terrible situation! Yes, Gabrielle, this provoking, this incomprehensible, this too amiable man has entangled your poor friend past recovery. Her sentiments and sensations must henceforward be in eternal opposition to each other. Friendship, gratitude, honour, virtue, all in tremendous array, forbid her to think of love; but love, imperious love, will not be so defied: he seizes upon his victim, and now, as in all the past, will be the ruler, the tyrant of Olivia's destiny. Never was confusion, amazement, terror, remorse, equal to mine, Gabrielle, when I first discovered that I loved him. Who could have foreseen, who could have imagined it? I meant but to satisfy an innocent curiosity,

to indulge harmless coquetry, to gratify the natural love of admiration, and to enjoy the possession of power. Alas! I felt not that while I was acquiring ascendency over the heart of another I was beguiled of all command over my own. I flattered myself, that when honour should bid me stop, I could pause without hesitation, without effort: I promised myself, that the moment I should discover that I was loved by the husband of my friend I should fly from him for ever. Alas! it is no longer time—to fly from him is no longer in my power. O Gabrielle! I love him: he knows that I love him. Never did woman suffer more than I have done since I wrote to you last. The conflict was too violent for my feeble frame. I have been ill—very ill: a nervous fever brought me nearly to the grave. Why did I not die? I should have escaped the deep humiliation, the endless self-reproach to which my future existence is doomed. Leonora!—Why do I start at that name? Oh! there is horror in the sound! Even now perhaps she knows and triumphs in my weakness. Even now perhaps her calm insensible soul blesses itself for not being made like mine. Even now perhaps her husband doubts whether he shall accept Olivia's love, or sacrifice your wretched friend to Leonora's pride. O Gabrielle, no words can describe what I suffer! But I must be calm, and explain the progress of this fatal passion. Explain—heavens! how shall I explain what I cannot recollect without heart-rending anguish and confusion! O Gabrielle! pity

Your distracted

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Monday.

My dear romantic Olivia! you must have a furious passion for tormenting yourself, when you can find matter for despair in your present situation. In your place, I should rejoice to find that in the moment an old passion had consumed itself, a new one, fresh and vigorous, springs from its ashes. My charming friend, understand your own interests, and do not be the dupe of those fine phrases that we are obliged to employ to deceive others. Rail at Cupid as much as you please to the men in public,

par façon; but always remember for your private use, that love is essential to our existence in society. What is a woman when she neither loves nor is loved? a mere *personage muet* in the drama of life. Is it not from our lovers that we derive our consequence? Even a beauty without lovers is but a queen without subjects. A woman who renounces love is an abdicated sovereign, always longing to resume her empire when it is too late; continually forgetting herself, like the pseudo-philosophic Christian, talking and acting as though she had still the power of life and death in her hands; a tyrant without guards or slaves; a most awkward, pitiable, and ridiculous personage. No, my fair Olivia, let us never abjure love: even when the reign of beauty passes away, that of grace and sentiment remains. As much delicacy as you please: without delicacy there is no grace, and without a veil beauty loses her most captivating charms. I pity you, my dear, for having let your veil be blown aside *malheureusement*. But such accidents will happen. Who can control the passions or the winds? After all, *l'erreur d'un moment* is not irretrievable, and you reproach yourself too bitterly, my sweet friend, for your involuntary injustice to Lady Leonora. Assuredly it could not be your intention to sacrifice your repose to Mr. L——. You loved him against your will, did you not? And it is, you know, by the intention that we must judge of actions: the positive harm done to the world in general is in all cases the only just measure of criminality. Now what harm is done to the universe, and what injury can accrue to any individual, provided you keep your own counsel? As long as your friend is deceived, she is happy; it therefore becomes your duty, your virtue, to dissemble. I am no great casuist, but all this appears to me self-evident; and these I always thought were your principles of philosophy. My dear Olivia, I have drawn out my whole store of metaphysics with some difficulty for your service; I flatter myself I have set your poor distracted head to rights. One word more—for I like to go to the bottom of a subject, when I can do so in two minutes: virtue is desirable because it makes us happy; consequently, to make ourselves happy is to be truly virtuous. Methinks this is sound logic.

To tell you the truth, my dear Olivia, I do not well conceive how you have contrived to fall in love with

this half-frozen Englishman. 'Tis done, however—there is no arguing against facts; and this is only one proof more of what I have always maintained, that destiny is inevitable, and love irresistible. Voltaire's charming inscription on the statue of Cupid is worth all the volumes of reasoning and morality that ever were or ever will be written. Banish melancholy thoughts, my dear friend; they serve no manner of purpose but to increase your passion. Repentance softens the heart; and everybody knows, that what softens the heart disposes it more to love: for which reason I never abandon myself to this dangerous luxury of repentance. Mon Dieu! why will people never profit by experience! And to what purpose do they read history? Was not La Valliere ever penitent and ever transgressing? ever in transports or in tears? You, at all events, my Olivia, can never become a Carmelite or a Magdalen. You have emancipated yourself from superstition: but while you ridicule all religious orders, do not inflict upon yourself their penances. The habit of some of the orders has been thought becoming. The modest costume of a nun is indeed one of the prettiest dresses one can wear at a masquerade ball, and it might even be worn without a mask, if it were fashionable: but nothing that is not fashionable can be becoming.

Adieu, my adorable Olivia: I will send you by the first opportunity your Lyons gown, which is really charming.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER XXXIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Nov. 30th, ——.

YOUR truly philosophical letter, my infinitely various Gabrielle, infused a portion of its charming spirit into my soul. My mind was fortified and elevated by your eloquence. Who could think that a woman of such a lively genius could be so profound! and who could expect from a woman who has passed her life in the world such original and deep reflections! You see you were mistaken when you thought that you had no genius for philosophic subjects.

After all that has been said by metaphysicians about the existence and seat of the moral sense, I think I can solve every difficulty by a new theory. You know some philosophers suppose the moral sense to be intuitive and inherent in man: others, who deny the doctrine of innate ideas, treat this notion of innate sentiments as equally absurd. There they certainly are wrong; for sentiments are widely different from ideas, and I have that within me which convinces my understanding that sentiments must be innate, and proportioned to the delicacy of our sensibility; no person of common sense or feeling can doubt this. But there are other points which I own puzzled me till yesterday: some metaphysicians would seat the moral sense inherently in the heart, others would place it intuitively in the brain, all would confine it to the soul; now in my opinion it resides primarily and principally in the nerves, and varies with their variations. Hence the difficulty of making the moral sense a universal guide of action, since it not only differs in many individuals, but in the same persons at different periods of their existence, or (as I have often experienced) at different hours of the day. All this must depend upon the mobility of the nervous system: upon this may *hinge* the great difficulties which have puzzled metaphysicians respecting consciousness, identity, &c. If they had attended less to the nature of the soul, and more to the system of the nerves, they would have avoided innumerable errors, and probably would have made incalculably important discoveries. Nothing is wanting but some great German genius to bring this idea of a moral sense in the nerves into fashion. Indeed, if our friend Mad. *** would mention it in the notes to her new novel, it would introduce it in the most satisfactory manner possible to all the fashionable world abroad; and we take our notion in this country implicitly from the Continent. As for you, my dear Gabrielle, I know you cut the gordian knot at once, by referring, with your favourite moralist, every principle of human nature to self-love. This does not quite accord with my ideas; there is something harsh in it that is repugnant to my sensibility; but you have a stronger mind than I have, and perhaps your theory is right.

"You tell me I contradict myself continually," says

the acute and witty Duke de la Rochefoucault: "no, but the human heart, of which I treat, is in perpetual contradiction to itself." Permit me to avail myself of this answer, dear Gabrielle, if you should accuse me of contradicting in this letter all that I said to you in my last. A few hours after I had despatched it the state of my nerves changed; I saw things of course in a new light, and repented having exposed myself to your raillery by writing in such a Magdalen strain. My nerves were more in fault than I. When one's mind or one's nerves grow weak, the early associations and old prejudices of the nursery recur, and tyrannize over one's reason. From this evil your liberal education and enviable temperament have preserved you; but have charity for my feminine weakness of frame, which too often counteracts the masculine strength of my soul. Now that I have deprecated your ridicule for my last nervous nonsense, I will go on in a more rational manner. However my better judgment might have been clouded for a moment, I have recovered strength of mind enough to see that I am in no way to blame for any thing that has happened. If a man is amiable, and if I have taste and sensibility, I must see and feel it. "To love," as I remember your friend G****** once finely observed to you, "to love is a crime only in the eyes of demons, or of priests who resemble demons." This is a general proposition, to which none but the prejudiced can refuse their assent; and what is true in general must be true in particular. The *accident*,—I use the term philosophically, not popularly,—the accident of a man's being married, or, in other words, having entered imprudently into a barbarous and absurd civil contract, cannot alter the nature of things. The essence of truth cannot be affected by the variation of external circumstances. Now the proper application of metaphysics frees the mind from vulgar prejudices, and dissipates the baby-terrors of an ill-educated conscience. To fall in love with a married man, and the husband of your intimate friend! How dreadful the sounds to some ears! even mine were startled at first, till I called reason to my assistance. Then I had another difficulty to combat—to own, and own unasked, a passion to the object of it would shock the false delicacy of those who are governed by common forms, and who are slaves to vulgar

prejudices; but a little philosophy liberates our sex from the tyranny of custom, teaches us to disdain hypocrisy, and to glory in the simplicity of truth.

Josephine had been perfuming my hair, and I was sitting reading at my toilet; the door of my dressing-room happened to be half-open; L—— was crossing the gallery, and as he passed I suppose his eye was caught by my hair, or perhaps he paused a moment; I am not certain how it was—my eyes were on my book.

"Ah! vous avez raison, monsieur, c'est la plus belle chevelure! Mais entrez donc, monsieur," cried Josephine, whom I can never teach to comprehend or respect English customs; "eh! entrez, entrez, monsieur; madame est à sa toilette."

As I looked up I could not forbear smiling at the extreme ease and decision of Josephine's manner, and the excessive doubt and anxiety in the gentleman's appearance. My smile, which, Heaven knows, meant no encouragement, decided him; timidity instantly gave way to joy; he entered. What was to be done? I could not turn him out again; I was not answerable for any foolish conclusions he might draw from what he ought in politeness to have considered as a thing of course. All I could do was to blame Josephine for being a Frenchwoman. To defend her, and flatter me, was the gentleman's part; and, for an Englishman, he really acquitted himself with tolerable grace. Josephine at least was pleased, and she found such a perpetual employment for monsieur, and his advice was so necessary, that there was no chance of his departure: so we talked of French *toilettes*, &c. &c., in French, for Josephine's edification. L—— paid me some compliments upon the recovery of my looks after my illness. I thought I looked terribly languid—but he assured me that this languor, in his eyes, was an additional grace. I could not understand this. He fancied that must be because he did not express himself well in French; he explained himself more clearly in English, which Josephine, you know, does not understand, so that she was now forced to be silent, and I was compelled to take my share in the conversation. L—— made me comprehend that languor, indicating sensibility of heart, was to him the most touching of female charms. I sighed, and took up the book I had been reading; it was the new novel which you sent me, dear Gabrielle; I talked of it, in hopes

of changing the course of the conversation; alas! this led to one far more dangerous. He looked at the passage I had been reading. This brought us back to sensibility again—to sentiments and descriptions so terribly apposite! we found such a similarity in our tastes! Yet L—— spoke only in general, and he preserved a command over himself which provoked me, though I knew it to be coquetry; I saw the struggle in his mind, and was determined to force him to be candid, and to enjoy my triumph. With these views I went further than I had intended. The charm of sensibility, he had told me, was to him irresistible. Alas! I let him perceive all the weakness of my heart. Sensibility is the worst time-keeper in the world. We were neither of us aware of its progressive motion. The Swiss—my evil genius—the Swiss knocked at the door, to let me know dinner was served. Dinner! on what vulgar incidents the happiness of life depends! Dinner came between the discovery of my sentiments and that declaration of passion which I now must hear—or die.

"Le diner! mon Dieu!" cried Josephine. "Mais—finissons donc—la toilette de madame."

I heard the impertinent Swiss at the other end of the gallery at his master's door, wondering in broken English where his master could be, and conjecturing forty absurdities about his boots, and his being out riding, &c. &c. To sally forth in conscious innocence upon the enemy's spies, and to terminate the adventure as it was begun, *à la Françoise*, was my resolution. L—— and Josephine understood me perfectly.

"Eh! Monsieur de Vaud," said Josephine to the Swiss, whom we met on the landing-place of the stairs, "madame n'est elle pas coeffée à ravir aujourd'hui? C'est que monsieur vient d'assister à la toilette de madame." The Swiss bowed, and said nothing. The bow was to his master, not to me; and it was a bow of duty, not of inclination. I never saw a man look so like a machine; he did not even raise his eyes upon me or my *coëffure* as we passed.

"Bah!" cried Josephine, with an inexpressible accent of mingled indignation and contempt. She ran down stairs, leaving the Swiss to his stupidity. I was more afraid of his penetration. But I entered the dining-room as if nothing extraordinary had happened; and, after all, you know, my dear Gabrielle, nothing extraordinary had

befallen us. A gentleman had assisted at a lady's toilet. Nothing more simple, nothing more proper in the meridian of Paris; and does propriety change with meridians? There was company at dinner, and the conversation was general and uninteresting. L—— endeavoured to support his part with vivacity; but he had fits of absence and silence which might have alarmed Leonora, if she had any suspicion. But she is now perfectly secure, and absolutely blind; therefore you see there can be no danger for her happiness in my remaining where I am. For no earthly consideration would I disturb her peace of mind; there is no sacrifice I would hesitate for a moment to make to friendship or virtue, but I cannot surely be called upon to *plant a dagger in my own heart*, to destroy, for ever to destroy my own felicity without advantage to my friend. My attachment to L—— is, as you say, involuntary, and my love as pure as it is fervent. I have reason to believe that his sentiments are the same for me; but of this I am not yet certain. There is the danger, and the only real danger, for Leonora's happiness; for while this uncertainty and his consequent fits of absence and imprudence last, there is hazard every moment of her being alarmed. But when L—— once decides, every thing arranges itself, you know, Gabrielle, and prudence becomes a duty to ourselves and to Leonora. No word, or look, or coquetry could then escape us; we should be unpardonable if we did not conduct ourselves with the most scrupulous delicacy and attention to her feelings. I am amazed that L——, who has really a good understanding, does not make these reflections, and is not determined by this calculation. For his, for my own, but most for Leonora's sake, I wish that this cruel suspense were at an end. Adieu, dear and amiable Gabrielle. These things are managed better in France.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XL.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

L—— Castle.

DEAR MARGARET,

I ARRIVED here late yesterday evening, in high spirits and high hopes of surprising and delighting all the world by my unexpected appearance; but my pride was checked and my tone changed, the moment I saw Leonora. Never was any human being so altered in her looks in so short a time. I had just, and but just presence of mind enough not to say so. I am astonished that it does not strike Mr. L——. As soon as she left the room I asked him if Lady Leonora had been ill? No; perfectly well! perfectly well!—Did not he perceive that she looked extremely ill? No; she might be paler than usual: that was all that Mr. L—— had observed. Lady Olivia, after a pause, added, that Leonora certainly had not appeared well lately, but this was nothing extraordinary in her *situation*. *Situation!* nonsense! Lady Olivia went on with sentimental hypocrisy of look and tone, saying fine things, to which I paid little attention. Virtue in words, and vice in actions! thought I. People of certain pretensions in the court of sentiment think that they can pass false virtues upon the world for real, as some ladies, entitled by their rank to wear jewels, appear in false stones, believing that it will be taken for granted they would wear nothing but diamonds. Not one eye in a hundred detects the difference at first, but in time the hundredth eye comes, and then they must for ever hide their diminished rays. Beware! Lady Olivia, beware!

Leonora is ill, or unhappy, or both; but she will not allow that she is either. On one subject she is impenetrable: a hundred, a thousand different ways within these four-and-twenty hours have I led to it, with all the ingenuity and all the delicacy of which I am mistress; but all to no purpose. Neither by provocation, persuasion, laughing, teasing, questioning, cross or round about, pushing, squeezing, encompassing, taking for granted, wondering, or blundering, could I gain my point. Every

look guarded—every syllable measured—yet unequivocal—

"She said no more than just the thing she ought."

Because I could find no fault I was half-angry. I respect the motive of this reserve; but towards me it is misplaced, and ill-judged, and it must not exist. I have often declared that I would never condescend to play the part of a confidante to any princess or heroine upon earth. But Leonora is neither princess nor heroine, and I would be her confidante, but she will not let me. Now I am punished for my pride. If she would only trust me, if she would only tell me what has passed since I went, and all that now weighs upon her mind, I could certainly be of some use. I could and would say every thing that she might scruple to hint to Lady Olivia, and I will answer for it I would make her raise the siege. But I cannot believe Mr. L—— to be such a madman as to think of attaching himself seriously to a woman like Olivia, when he has such a wife as Leonora. That he was amusing himself with Olivia I saw, or thought I saw, some time ago, and I rather wondered that Leonora was uneasy: for all husbands will flirt, and all wives must bear it, thought I. When such a coquette as this fell in his way, and made advances, he would have been more than man if he had receded. Of course, I thought he must despise and laugh at her all the time he was flattering and gallanting her ladyship. This would have been fair play, and comic; but the comedy should have ended by this time. I am now really afraid it will turn into a tragedy. I, even I! am alarmed. I must prevail upon Leonora to speak to me without reserve. I see her suffer, and I must share her grief. Have not I always done so from the time we were children? and now, when she most wants a friend, am not I worthy to share her confidence? Can she mistake friendship for impertinent curiosity? Does not she know that I would not be burthened with the secrets of anybody whom I did not love? If she thinks otherwise she does me injustice, and I will tell her so before I sleep. She does not know how well I love her.

My dear Margaret, Leonora and I have had a quarrel—the first serious quarrel we ever had in our lives; and

the end of it is, that she is an angel, and I am a fool. Just as I laid down my pen after writing to you, though it was long past midnight, I marched into Leonora's apartment, resolved to surprise or to force her confidence. I found her awake, as I expected, and up and dressed, as I did not expect, sitting in her dressing-room, her head leaning upon her hand. I knew what she was thinking of; she had a heap of Mr. L——'s old letters beside her. She denied that she was in tears, and I will not swear to the tears, but I think I saw signs of them notwithstanding. I spoke out; but in vain—all in vain. At last I flew into a passion, and reproached her bitterly. She answered me with that air of dignified tenderness which is peculiar to her—"If you believe me to be unhappy, my dear Helen, is this a time to reproach me unjustly?" I was brought to reason and to tears, and after asking pardon, like a foolish naughty child, was kissed and forgiven, upon a promise never to do so any more; a promise which I hope Heaven will grant me grace and strength of mind enough to keep. I was certainly wrong to attempt to force her secret from her. Leonora's confidence is always given, never yielded; and in her, openness is a virtue, not a weakness. But I wish she would not contrive to be always in the right. In all our quarrels, in all the variations of my humour, I am obliged to end by doing homage to her reason, as the Chinese mariners, in every change of weather, burn incense before the needle.

Your affectionate
HELEN C——.

LETTER XLI.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

L—— Castle, Friday.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I HOPED that you would have favoured us with a passing visit in your way from town, but I know you will tell me that friendship must not interfere with the interests of the service. I have reason to curse those interests; they are for ever at variance with mine. I had a particular desire to speak to you upon a subject on which it is not agreeable to me to write. Lady Leonora

also wished extremely and disinterestedly for your company. She does not know how much she is obliged to you. The laconic advice you gave me some time ago influenced my conduct longer than counsel which is in opposition to our passions usually does, and it has haunted my imagination perpetually :—"My dear L——, do not end by being the dupe of a *Frenchified* coquette."

My dear friend, of that there is no danger. No man upon earth despises or detests coquettes more than I do, be they French or English. I think, however, that a foreign-born or foreign-bred coquette has more of the ease of *practice*, and less of the awkwardness of conscience, than a home-bred flirt, and is in reality less blameable, for she breaks no restraints of custom or education; she does only what she has seen her mother do before her, and what is authorized by the example of most of the fashionable ladies of her acquaintance. But let us put flirts and coquettes quite out of the question. My dear general, you know that I am used to women, and take it upon my word, that the lady to whom I allude is more tender and passionate than vain. Every woman has, or has had, a tincture of vanity; but there are a few, and those are to me the most amiable of the sex, who

"Feel every vanity in fondness lost."

You know that I am delicate, even fastidious, in my taste for female manners. Nothing can, in my opinion, make amends for any offence against propriety, except it be sensibility—genuine, generous sensibility. This can, in my mind, cover a multitude of faults. There is so much of selfishness, of hypocrisy, of coldness, in what is usually called female virtue, that I often turn with distaste from those to whom I am compelled to do homage for the sake of the general good of society. I am not *charlatan* enough to pretend upon all occasions to prefer the public advantage to my own. I confess, that let a woman be ever so fair, or good, or wise—

"Be she with that goodness blest
Which may merit name of best,
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be!"

And I will further acknowledge, that I am not easily satisfied with the manner in which a woman is kind to me: if it be duty-work kindness, I would not give

thanks for it: it is done for her reputation, not for me, and let the world thank her. *To the best of wives* I should make the worst of husbands. No—I should, I hope, pay her in her own coin, with all due observances, attentions, and respect, but without one grain of love. Love is only to be had for love; and without it, nothing a woman can give appears to me worth having. I do not desire to be loved well enough to satisfy fathers and mothers, and uncles and aunts; well enough to decide a woman to marry me rather than disoblige her friends, or run the chance of having *many a worse offer*, and living perhaps to be an old maid. I do not desire to be loved well enough to keep a woman true and faithful to me "*till death us do part:*" in short, I do not desire to be loved well enough for a husband; I desire to be loved sufficiently for a lover; not only above all other persons, but above all other things, all other considerations —to be the first and last object in the heart of the woman to whom I am attached: I wish to feel that I sustain and fill the whole of her heart. I must be certain that I am every thing to her, as she is every thing to me; that there is no imaginable situation in which she would not live with me, in which she would not be happy to live with me; no possible sacrifice that she would not make for me; or rather, that nothing she could do should appear a sacrifice. Are these exorbitant expectations? I am capable of all this, and more, for a woman I love; and it is my pride, or my misfortune, to be able to love upon no other terms. Such proofs of attachment it may be difficult to obtain, and even to give; more difficult, I am sensible, for a wife than for a mistress. A young lady who is married *secundum artem*, with license and consent of friends, can give no extraordinary instances of affection. I should not consider it as an indisputable proof of love, that she does me the honour to give me her hand in a church, or that she condescends to bespeak my liveries, or to be handed into her own coach with all the blushing honours of a bride; all the paraphernalia of a wife secured, all the prudent and necessary provision made both for matrimonial love and hatred, dower, pin-money, and separate maintenance on the one hand, and on the other, lands, tenements, and hereditaments for the future son and heir, and sums without end for younger children to the tenth and twentieth possibility, *as the case may be, nothing herein contained to the*

contrary in anywise notwithstanding. Such a jargon Cupid does not understand. A woman may love this most convenient personage, her lawful husband; but I should think it difficult for the delicacy of female passion to survive the cool preparations for hymeneal felicity. At all events, you will allow the lady makes no sacrifice, she shows no great generosity, and she may, or she may not, be touched at the altar by the divine flame. My good general, when you are a husband you will feel these things as I do; till then it is very easy to talk as you do, and to admire other men's wives, and to wish Heaven had blessed you with such a treasure. For my part, the single idea, that a woman thinks it her duty to be fond of me would deprive me of all pleasure in her love. No man can be more sensible than I am of the amiable and estimable qualities of Lady Leonora L——; I should be a brute and a liar if I hesitated to give the fullest testimony in her praise; but such is the infirmity of my nature, that I could pardon some faults more easily than I could like some virtues. The virtues which leave me in doubt of a woman's love I can esteem, but that is all. Lady Leonora is calm, serene, perfectly sweet-tempered, without jealousy and without suspicion; in one word, without love. If she loved me, she never could have been the wife she has been for some months past. You will laugh at my being angry with a wife for not being jealous. But so it is. Certain defects of temper I could bear, if I considered them as symptoms of strong affection. When I for a moment believed that Leonora suffered, when I attributed her fainting at our fête champêtre to jealousy, I was so much alarmed and touched, that I absolutely forgot her rival. I did more; to prevent her feeling uneasiness, to destroy the suspicions which I imagined had been awakened in her mind, I hesitated not to sacrifice all the pleasure and all the vanity which a man of my age might reasonably be supposed to feel in the prospect of a new and not inglorious conquest; I left home immediately, and went to meet you, my dear friend, on your return from abroad. This visit I do not set down to your account, but to that of honour—foolish, unnecessary honour. You half-persuaded me, that your hearsay Parisian evidence was more to be trusted than my own judgment, and I returned home with the resolution not to be the dupe of a coquette. Leonora's reception of me was

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delightful; I never saw her in such spirits, or so amiable. But I could not help wishing to ascertain whether I had attributed her fainting to the real cause. This proof I tempted to my cost. Instead of showing any tender alarm at the renewal of my obvious attentions to her rival, she was perfectly calm and collected, went on with her usual occupations, fulfilled all her duties, never reproached me by word or look, never for one moment betrayed impatience, ill-humour, suspicion, or jealousy; in short, I found that I had been fool enough to attribute to excess of affection an accident which proceeded merely from the situation of her health. If anxiety of mind had been the cause of her fainting at the fête champêtre, she would since have felt and shown agitation on a thousand occasions, where she has been perfectly tranquil. Her friend Mrs. C——, who returned here a few days ago, seems to imagine that Leonora looks ill; but I shall not again be led to mistake bodily indisposition for mental suffering. Leonora's conduct argues great insensibility of soul, or great command; great insensibility, I think: for I cannot imagine such command of temper possible to any but a woman who feels indifference for the offender. Yet, even now that I have steeled myself with this conviction, I am scarcely bold enough to hazard the chance of giving her pain. Absurd weakness! It has been clearly proved to my understanding, that my irresolution, my scruples of conscience, my combats between love and esteem, are more likely to betray the real state of my mind than any decision that I could make. I decide, then—I determine to be happy with a woman who has a soul capable of feeling, not merely what is called conjugal affection, but the passion of love; who is capable of sacrificing every thing to love; who has given me proofs of candour and greatness of mind, which I value far above all her wit, grace, and beauty. My dear general, I know all that you can tell, all that you can hint concerning her history abroad. I know it from her own lips. It was told to me in a manner that made her my admiration. It was told to me as a preservative against the danger of loving her. It was told to me with the generous design of protecting Leonora's happiness; and all this at the moment when I was beloved, tenderly beloved. She is above dissimulation: she scorns the arts, the fears of her sex. She knows you are her enemy, and yet she

esteems you; she urged me to speak to you with the utmost openness: "Let me never," said she, "be the cause of your feeling less confidence or less affection for the best of friends."

R*** is sacrificed to me; that R***, with whose cursed name you tormented me. My dear friend, she will force your admiration, as she has won my love.

Yours sincerely,

F. L——.

LETTER XLII.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

L—— Castle.

As I am not trusted with the secret, I may, my dear Margaret, use my own eyes and ears as I please to find it out; and I know Leonora's countenance so well, that I see every thing that passes in her mind just as clearly as if she had told it to me in words.

It grieves me more than I can express to see her suffering as she does. I am now convinced that she has reason to be unhappy; and, what is worse, I do not see what course she can follow to recover her happiness. All her forbearance, all her patience, all her sweet temper, I perceive, are useless, or worse than useless, injurious to her in her strange husband's opinion. I never liked him thoroughly, and now I detest him. He thinks her cold, insensible! She insensible! —Brute! Idiot! Every thing that she says or does displeases him. The merest trifles excite the most cruel suspicions. He totally misunderstands her character, and sees every thing about her in a false light. In short, he is under the dominion of an artful fiend, who works as she pleases upon his passions—upon his pride, which is his ruling passion.

This evening Lady Olivia began confessing that she had too much sensibility, that she was of an excessively susceptible temper, and that she should be terribly jealous of the affections of any person she loved. She did not know how love *could* exist without jealousy. Mr. L—— was present, and listening eagerly. Leonora's lips were silent; not so her countenance. I was in hopes Mr. L—— would have remarked its beautiful touching expression; but his eyes were fixed upon Olivia. I could have . . . . . but let me go on. Lady

Olivia had the malice suddenly to appeal to Leonora, and asked whether she was never jealous of her husband? Leonora, astonished by her assurance, paused for an instant, and then replied "It would be difficult to convince me that I had any reason to be jealous of Mr. L——, I esteem him so much."—"I wish to heaven!" exclaimed Lady Olivia, her eyes turned upward with a fine St. Cecilia expression, while Mr. L——'s attention was fixed upon her, "would to heaven I was blessed with such a *reasonable* temper!"—"When you are wishing to heaven, Lady Olivia," said I, "had not you better ask for *all you want* at once; not only such a reasonable temper, but such a feeling heart?"

Some of the company smiled. Lady Olivia, practised as she is, looked disconcerted; Mr. L—— grave and impenetrable; Leonora, blushing, turned away to the piano-forte. Mr. L—— remained talking with Lady Olivia, and he neither saw nor heard her. If Leonora had sung like an angel, it would have made no impression. She turned over the leaves of her music quickly, to a lively air, and played it immediately, to prevent my perceiving how much she felt. Poor Leonora! you are but a bad dissembler, and it is in vain to try to conceal yourself from me.

I was so sorry for her, and so incensed with Olivia this night, that I could not restrain myself, and I made matters worse. At supper I came almost to open war with her ladyship. I cannot remember exactly what I said, but I know that I threw out the most severe innuendoes which politeness could permit: and what *was* the consequence? Mr. L—— pitied Olivia and hated me; Leonora was in misery the whole time; and her husband probably thought that she was the instigator, though she was perfectly innocent. My dear Margaret, where will all this end? and how much more mischief shall I do, with the best intentions possible?

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XLIII.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Your letter has travelled after me God knows where, my dear L——, and has caught me at last with my foot in the stirrup. I have just had time to look it over. I find, in short, that you are in love. I give you joy! But be in love like a madman, not like a fool. Call a demirep an angel, and welcome; but remember that such angels are to be had any day in the year; and such a wife as yours is not to be had for the mines of Golconda. Coin your heart, and drop your blood for it, and you will never be loved by any other woman so well as you are by Lady Leonora L——.

As to your jealous hypochondriacism, more of that when I have more leisure. In the meantime I wish it well cured. I am, my dear friend,

Yours truly,
J. B

LETTER XLIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L——Castle.

I triumph! dear Gabrielle, give me joy! Never was triumph more complete. L—— loves me! That I knew long ago; but I have at last forced from his proud heart the avowal of his passion. Love and Olivia are victorious over scruples, prejudice, pride, and superstition!

Leonora feels not—sees not: she requires, she excites no pity. Long may her delusion last! But even were it this moment to dissipate, what cause have I for remorse! "Who is most to blame, he who ceases to love, or she who ceases to please?" Leonora perhaps thinks that she loves her husband; and no doubt she does so in a conjugal sort of a way: he *has* loved his wife; but be it mine to prove that his heart is suited to far other raptures; and if Olivia be called upon for sacrifices, *Olivia* can make them.

"Let wealth, let honour wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
Before true passion all those views remove,
Fame, wealth, and honour, what are you to love!"

These lines, though quoted perpetually by the tender and passionate, can never become stale and vulgar; they will always recur in certain situations to persons of delicate sensibility, for they at once express all that can be said, and justify all that can be felt. My amiable Gabrielle, adieu. Pardon me if to-day I have no soul even for friendship. This day is all for love.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XLV.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

WHAT the devil would you have of your wife, my dear L——? You would be loved above all earthly considerations; honour, duty, virtue, and religion inclusive, would you? and you would have a wife with her head in the clouds, would you? I wish you were married to one of the all-for-love heroines, who would treat you with bowl and dagger every day of your life. In your opinion sensibility covers a multitude of faults—you would have said *sins:* so it had need, for it produces a multitude. Pray what brings hundreds and thousands of women to the Piazzas of Covent Garden but sensibility? What does the colonel's, and the captain's, and the ensign's mistress talk of but *sensibility?* And are you, my dear friend, to be duped by this hackneyed word? And should you really think it an indisputable proof of a lady's love, that she would jump out of a two pair of stairs window into your arms? Now I should think myself sure of such a woman's love only just while I held her, and scarcely then; for I, who in my own way am jealous as well as yourself, should in this case be jealous of wickedness, and should strongly suspect that she would love the first devil that she saw better than me.

You are always raving about sacrifices. Your Cupid must be a very vindictive little god. Mine is a good-humoured, rosy little fellow, who desires no better than to see me laugh and be happy. But to every man his own Cupid. If you cannot believe in love without

sacrifices, you must have them, to be sure. And now, in sober sadness, what do you think your heroine would sacrifice for you? Her reputation? that, pardon me, is out of her power. Her virtue? I have no doubt she would. But before I can estimate the value of this sacrifice, I must know whether she makes it to you or to her pleasure. Would she give up in any instance her pleasure for your happiness? This is not an easy matter to ascertain with respect to a mistress: but your wife has put it beyond a doubt, that she prefers your happiness, not only to her pleasure, but to her pride, and to every thing that the sex usually prefer to a husband. You have been wounded by a poisoned arrow; but you have a faithful wife, who can extract the poison. Lady Leonora's affection is not a mere fit of goodness and generosity, such as I have seen in many women; but it is a steadiness of attachment in the hour of trial, which I have seen in few. For several months past you have, by your own account, put her temper and her love to the most severe tests, yet she has never failed for one moment, never reproached you by word or look. But maybe she has no feeling. No feeling! you can have none, if you say so: no penetration, if you think so. Would not you think me a tyrant if I put a poor fellow on the picket, and told you, when he bore it without a groan, that it was because he could not feel? You do worse, you torture the soul of the woman who loves you; she endures, she is calm, she smiles upon you even in agony; and you tell me she cannot feel! she cannot feel like an Olivia! No; and so much the better for her husband, for she will then have only feeling enough for him, she will not extend her charity to all his sex. But Olivia has such candour and magnanimity, that I must admire her! I humbly thank her for offering to make me her confidant, for offering to tell me what I know already, and what she is certain that I know. These were good moves, but I understand the game as well as her ladyship does. As to her making a friend of me; if she means an enemy to Lady Leonora L——, I would sooner see her—in heaven: but if she would do me the favour to think no more of your heart, which is too good for her, and to accept of my—my—what shall I say?—my devoirs, I am at her command. She shall drive my curricle, &c. &c. She would suit me vastly

well for a month or two, and by that time poor R*** would make his appearance, or somebody in his stead: at the worst, I should have a chance of some blessed metaphysical quirk, which would prove that inconstancy was a virtue, or that a new love is better than an old one. When it came to that, I should make my best bow, put on my most disconsolate face, and retire.

You will read all this in a very different spirit from that in which it is written. If you are angry—no matter: I am cool. I tell you beforehand that I will not fight you for any thing I have said in this letter, or that I ever may say about your Olivia. Therefore, my dear L——, save yourself the trouble of challenging me. I thank God I have reputation enough to be able to dispense with the glory of blowing out your brains.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER XLVI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

We have been very gay here the last few days: the gallant and accomplished Prince —— has been here. H****, the witty H****, who is his favourite companion, introduced him; and he seems so much charmed with the old castle, its towers and battlements, and with its *cynosure*, that I know not when he will be able to prevail upon himself to depart. To-morrow, he says; but so he has said these ten days: he cannot resist the entreaties of his kind host and hostess to stay another day. The soft accent of the beautiful Leonora will certainly detain him *one day more*, and her gracious smile will bereave him of rest for months to come. He has evidently fallen desperately in love with her. Now we shall see virtue in danger.

I have always been of opinion with St. Evremond and Ninon de l'Enclos, that no female virtue can stand every species of test; fortunately it is not always exposed to trial. Reputation may be preserved by certain persons in certain situations, upon very easy terms. Leonora, for instance, is armed so strong in character, that no common mortal will venture to attack her. It would be presumption little short of high-treason to imagine the fall of the Lady Leonora L——, the daughter of the Duchess of ***, who, with a long line of im-

maculate baronesses in their own right, each in her armour of stiff stays, stands frowning defiance upon the adventurous knights. More alarming still to the modern seducer appears a judge in his long wig, and a jury with their long faces, ready to bring in their verdict, and to award damages proportionate to the rank and fortune of the parties. Then the former reputation of the lady is talked of, and the irreparable injury sustained by the disconsolate husband from the loss of the solace and affection of this paragon of wives. And it is proved that she lived in the most perfect harmony with him till the vile seducer appeared: who, in aggravation of damages, was a confidential friend of the husband's, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.

Brave, indeed, and desperately in love must be the man who could dare all these to deserve the fair. But princes are, it is said, naturally brave, and ambitious of conquering difficulties.

I have insinuated these reflections in a general way to L——, who applies them so as to plague himself sufficiently. Heaven is my witness that I mean no injury to Lady Leonora; yet I fear that there are moments when my respect for her superiority, joined to the consciousness of my own weakness, overpowers me, and I almost envy her the right she retains to the esteem of the man I love. This is a blameable weakness—I know it—I reproach myself bitterly; but all I can do is to confess it candidly. L—— sees my conflicts, and knows how to value the sensibility of my fond heart. Adieu, my Gabrielle. When shall I be happy? since even love has its torments, and I am thus doomed to be ever a victim to the tenderness of my soul.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XLVII.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

I DO not know whether I pity, love, or admire Leonora most. Just when her mind was deeply wounded by her husband's neglect, and when her jealousy was worked to the highest pitch by his passion for her dangerous rival, the Prince —— arrives here, and, struck by Leonora's charms of mind and person, falls passionately in love with her. Probably his highness's friend H****

had given him a hint of the existing circumstances, and he thought a more propitious moment could scarcely be found for making an impression upon a female mind. He judged of Leonora by other women. And I, like a simpleton, judged of her by myself. With shame I confess to you, my dear Margaret, that notwithstanding all my past experience, I did expect that she would have done as I am afraid I should have done in her situation. I think that I could not have resisted the temptation of coquetting a little—a very little—just to revive the passion of the man whom I really loved. This expedient succeeds so often with that wise sex, who never rightly know the value of a heart, except when they have just won it, or at the moment when they are on the point of losing it. In Leonora's place, and in such an emergency, I should certainly have employed that frightful monster jealousy to waken sleeping love; since he, and only he, can do it expeditiously and effectually. This I have hinted to Leonora, talking always *in generals*; for, since my total overthrow, I have never dared to come to particulars: but by putting cases and *confessing myself*, I contrived to make my thoughts understood. I then boasted of the extreme facility of the means I would adopt to recover a heart. Leonora answered in the words of a celebrated great man:—"C'est facile de se servir de pareils moyens; c'est difficile de s'y résoudre."

"But if no other means would succeed," said I, "would not you sacrifice your pride to your love?"

"My pride, willingly; but not my sense of what is right," said she, with an indescribable mixture of tenderness and firmness in her manner.

"Can a little coquetry in a good cause be such a heinous offence?" persisted I. I knew that I was wrong all the time; but I delighted in seeing how right she was.

No—she would not allow her mind to be cheated by female sophistry; nor yet by the male casuistry of—"The end sanctifies the means."

"If you had the misfortune to lose the affections of the man you love, and if you were quite certain of regaining them by following my recipe?" said I.

Never shall I forget the look with which Leonora left me, and the accent with which she said, "My dear Helen, if it were ever to be my misfortune to lose my

husband's love, I would not, even if I were certain of success, attempt to regain it by any unworthy arts. How could I wish to regain his love at the hazard of losing his esteem, and the certainty of forfeiting my own!"

I said no more—I had nothing more to say: I saw that I had given pain, and I have never touched upon the subject since. But her practice is even beyond her theory. Never, by deed, or look, or word, or thought (for I see all her thoughts in her eloquent countenance), has she swerved from her principles. No prudery—no coquetry—no mock-humility—no triumph. Never for an instant did she, by a proud air, say to her husband—See what others think of me! Never did a resentful look say to him—Inconstant!—revenge is in my power! Never even did a reproachful sigh express—I am injured, yet I do not retaliate.

Mr. L—— is blind; he is infatuated; he is absolutely bereaved of judgment by a perfidious, ungrateful, and cruel wretch. Let me vent my indignation to you, dear Margaret, or it will explode, perhaps, when it may do Leonora mischief.

Yours affectionately,
HELEN C——.

LETTER XLVIII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

THIS Lady Leonora, in her simplicity, never dreamed of love till the prince's passion was too visible and audible to be misunderstood: and then she changed her tone, and checked her simplicity, and was so reserved, and so dignified, and so *proper*, it was quite edifying, especially to a poor sinner of a coquette like me; nothing *piquante*; nothing *agaçante*; nothing *demi-voilée*; no retiring to be pursued; not a single manœuvre of coquetry did she practise. This convinces me that she cares not in the least for her husband; because, if she really loved him, and wished to reclaim his heart, what so natural or so simple as to excite his jealousy, and thus revive his love? After neglecting this golden opportunity, she can never convince me that she is really anxious

about her husband's heart. This I hinted to L——, and his own susceptibility had hinted it to him efficaciously before I spoke.

Though Leonora has been so correct hitherto, and so cold to the prince in her husband's presence, I have my suspicions, that if in his absence proper means were taken, if her pride were roused by apt suggestions, if it were delicately pointed out to her that she is shamefully neglected, that she is a cipher in her own house, that her husband presumes too much upon her sweetness of temper, that his inconstancy is wondered at by all who have eyes, and that a little retaliation might become her ladyship, I would not answer for her forbearance; that is to say, if all this were done by a dexterous man, a lover, and a prince! I shall take care my opinions shall be known; for I cannot endure to have the esteem of the man I love monopolized. Exposed to temptation as I have been, and with as ardent affections, Leonora, or I am much mistaken, would not have been more estimable. Adieu, my dearest Gabrielle. Nous verrons! nous verrons!

OLIVIA.

Sunday evening.

P.S.—I open my letter to tell you that the prince is actually gone. Doubtless he will return at a more auspicious moment.

Lady M—— and all the troop of friends are to depart on Monday; all but *the* bosom friend, *l'amie intime*, that insupportable Helen, who is ever at daggers-drawing with me. So much the better! L—— sees her cabals with his wife; she is a partisan, without the art to be so to any purpose, and her manœuvres tend only to increase his partiality for his Olivia.

LETTER XLIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

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* * * * * In short, Leonora has discovered all that she might have seen months ago between her husband and me. What will be the consequence? I long, yet almost fear, to meet her again. She is now in her own apartment, writing, I presume, to her mother for advice.

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LETTER L.

LEONORA TO OLIVIA.

[Left on Lady Olivia's dressing-table.]

O you, whom no kindness can touch, whom no honour can bind, whom no faith can hold, enjoy the torments you have inflicted on me! enjoy the triumph of having betrayed a confiding friend! Friend no more—affect, presume no longer to call me friend! I am under no necessity to dissemble, and dissimulation is foreign to my habits, and abhorrent to my nature! I know you to be my enemy, and I say so—my most cruel enemy; one who could, without reluctance or temptation, rob me of all I hold most dear. Yes, without temptation; for you do not love my husband, Olivia. On this point I cannot be mistaken; I know too well what it is to love him. Had you been struck by his great or good and amiable qualities, charmed by his engaging manners, or seduced by the violence of his passion; and had I seen you honourably endeavour to repress that passion; had I seen in you the slightest disposition to sacrifice your pleasure or your vanity to friendship or to duty, I think I could have forgiven, I am sure I should have pitied you. But you felt no pity for me, no shame for yourself; you made no attempt to avoid, you invited the danger. Mr. L—— was not the deceiver, but the deceived. By every art and every charm in your power —and you have many—you won upon his senses and

worked upon his imagination; you saw, and made it your pride to conquer the scruples of that affection he once felt for his wife, and that wife was your friend. By passing bounds, which he could not conceive that any woman could pass, except in the delirium of passion, you made him believe that your love for him exceeds all that I feel. How he will find himself deceived! If you had loved him as I do, you could not so easily have forfeited all claim to his esteem. Had you loved him so much, you would have loved honour more.

It is possible that Mr. L—— may taste some pleasure with you while his delusion lasts, while his imagination paints you, as mine once did, in false colours, possessed of generous virtues, and the victim of excessive sensibility: but when he sees you such as you are, he will recoil from you with aversion, he will reject you with contempt.

Knowing my opinion of you, Lady Olivia, you will not choose to remain in this house; nor can I desire for my guest one whom I can no longer, in private or in public, make my companion. Adieu.

LEONORA L——.

LETTER LI.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——

L—— Castle, Midnight.

FAREWELL for ever!—It must be so—Farewell for ever! Would to Heaven I had summoned courage sooner to pronounce these fatal, necessary, irrevocable words: then had I parted from you without remorse, without the obloquy to which I am now exposed. Oh, my dearest L——! Mine, do I still dare to call you! Yes, mine for the last time, I must call you, mine I must fancy you, though for the impious thought the Furies themselves were to haunt me to madness. My dearest L——, never more must we meet in this world! Think not that my weak voice alone forbids it: no, a stronger voice than mine is heard—an injured wife reclaims you. What a letter have I just received.....! —from..... Leonora! She tells me that she no longer desires for her guest one whom she cannot, in

public or private, make her companion—O Leonora, it was sufficient to banish me from your heart! She tells me not only that I have for ever forfeited her confidence, her esteem, her affection; but that I shall soon be your aversion and contempt. O cruel, cruel words! But I submit—I have deserved it all—I have robbed her of a heart above all price. Leonora, why did you not reproach me more bitterly? I desire, I implore to be crushed, to be annihilated by your vengeance! Most admirable, most virtuous, most estimable of women, best of wives, I have with sacrilegious love profaned a soul consecrated to you and conjugal virtue. I acknowledge my crime; trample upon me as you will, I am humbled in the dust. More than all your bitterest reproaches do I feel the remorse of having for a moment interrupted such serenity of happiness.

Oh, why did you persuade me, L——, and why did I believe, that Leonora was calm and free from all suspicion? How could I believe that any woman whom you had ever loved, could remain blind to your inconstancy, or feel secure indifference? Happy woman! in you to love is not a crime; you may glory in your passion, while I must hide mine from every human eye, drop in shameful secrecy the burning tear, stifle the struggling sigh, blush at the conflicts of virtue and sensibility, and carry shame and remorse with me to the grave. Happy Leonora! happy even when most injured, you have a right to complain to him you love; he is yours—you are his wife—his esteem, his affection are yours. On Olivia he has bestowed but a transient thought, and eternal ignominy must be her portion. So let it be—so I wish it to be. Would to Heaven I may thus atone for the past, and secure your future felicity. Fly to her, my dearest L——, I conjure you! throw yourself at her feet, entreat, implore, obtain her forgiveness. She cannot refuse it to your tears, to your caresses. To withstand them she must be more or less than woman. No, she cannot resist your voice when it speaks words of peace and love; she will press you with transport to her heart, and Olivia, poor Olivia, will be for ever forgotten: yet she will rejoice in your felicity; absolved perhaps in the eye of Heaven, though banished from your society, she will die content.

Full well am I aware of the consequences of quitting thus precipitately the house of Lady Leonora L——;

but nothing that concerns myself alone can for a moment make me hesitate to do that which the sentiment of virtue dictates, and which is yet more strongly urged by regard for the happiness of one who once allowed me to call her friend. I know my reputation is irrecoverably sacrificed; but it is to one for whom I would lay down my life. Can a woman who feels as I do deem any earthly good a sacrifice for him she loves? Dear L——, adieu for ever!

OLIVIA.

LETTER LII.

LEONORA TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

DEAREST MOTHER,

IT is all over—my husband is gone—gone perhaps for ever—all is in vain—all is lost!

Without saying more to you than I ought, I may tell you, that in consequence of an indignant letter which I wrote last night to Lady Olivia, she left my house this morning early, before any of the family were up. Mr. L—— heard of her departure before I did. He has, I will not say followed her, for of that I am not certain; but he has quitted home, and without giving me one kind look at parting, without even noticing a letter which I left last night upon his table. At what slight things we catch to save us from despair! How obstinate, how vain is hope! I fondly hoped, even to the last moment, that this letter, this foolish letter, would work a sudden change in my husband's heart, would operate miracles, would restore me to happiness. I fancied, absurdly fancied, that laying open my whole soul to him would have an effect upon his mind. Alas! has not my whole soul been always open to him? Could this letter tell him any thing but what he knows already, or what he will never know—how well I love him! I was weak to expect so much from it; yet as it expressed without complaint the anguish of disappointed affection, it deserved at least some acknowledgment. Could not he have said, "My dear Leonora, I thank you for your letter?"—or, more coldly still—"Leonora, I have received your letter?" Even that would have been some relief to me: but now all is despair. I saw him just

when he was going away, but for a moment; till the last instant he was not to be seen; then, in spite of all his command of countenance, I discerned strong marks of agitation; but towards me an air of resentment, more than any disposition to kinder thoughts. I fancy that he scarcely knew what he said, nor, I am sure, did I. He talked, I remember, of having immediate business in town, and I endeavoured to believe him. Contrary to his usual composed manner, he was in such haste to be gone, that I was obliged to send his watch and purse after him, which he had left on his dressing-table. How melancholy his room looked to me! His clothes just as he had left them—a rose which Lady Olivia gave him yesterday was in water on his table. My letter was not there; so he has it, probably unread. He will read it some time or other, perhaps—and some time or other, perhaps, when I am dead and gone, he will believe I loved him. Could he have known what I felt at the moment when he turned from me, he would have pitied me; for his nature, his character, cannot be quite altered in a few months, though he has ceased to love Leonora. From the window of his own room I watched for the last glimpse of him—heard him call to the postillions, and bid them "drive fast—faster." This was the last sound I heard of his voice. When shall I hear that voice again! I think that I shall certainly hear from him the day after to-morrow—and I wish to-day and to-morrow were gone.

I am afraid that you will think me very weak; but, my dear mother, I have no motive for fortitude now; and perhaps it might have been better for me if I had not exerted so much. I begin to fear that all my fortitude is mistaken for indifference. Something Mr. L—— said the other day about sensibility and sacrifices gave me this idea. Sensibility!—It has been my hard task for some months past to repress mine, that it might not give pain or disgust. I have done all that my reason and my dearest mother counselled; surely I cannot have done wrong. How apt we are to mistake the opinion and the taste of the man we love for the rule of right! Sacrifices! What sacrifices can I make?—All that I have, is it not his?—My whole heart, is it not his?—Myself, all that I am, all that I *can* be? Have I not lived with him of late, without recalling to his mind the idea that I suffer by his neglect? Have I not left his heart

at liberty, and can I make a greater sacrifice? I really do not understand what he means by sacrifices. A woman who loves her husband is part of him; whatever she does for him is for herself. I wish he would explain to me what he can mean by sacrifices—but when will he ever again explain his thoughts and feelings to me?

My dearest mother, it has been a relief to my mind to write all this to you; if there is no sense in it, you will forgive and encourage me by your affection and strength of mind, which, in all situations, have such power to sooth and support your daughter.

The Prince ——, who spent a fortnight here, paid me particular attention.

The prince talked of soon paying us another visit. If he should, I will not receive him in Mr. L——'s absence. This may seem like vanity or prudery; but no matter what it appears, if it is right.

Well might you, my best friend, bid me beware of forming an intimacy with an unprincipled woman. I have suffered severely for neglecting your counsels; how much I have still to endure is yet to be tried: but I can never be entirely miserable while I possess, and while I hope that I deserve, the affection of such a mother.

LEONORA L——.

LETTER LIII.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

If my approbation and affection can sustain you in this trying situation, your fortitude will not forsake you, my beloved daughter. Great minds rise in adversity; they are always equal to the trial, and superior to injustice: betrayed and deserted, they feel their own force, and they rely upon themselves. Be yourself, my Leonora! Persevere as you have begun, and, trust me, you will be happy. I abide by my first opinion, I repeat my prophecy—your husband's esteem, affection, love, will be permanently yours. Change of circumstances, however alarming, cannot shake the fixed judgment of my understanding. Character, as you justly observe, cannot utterly change in a few months. Your husband is

deceived, he is now as one in the delirium of a fever: he will recover his senses, and see Lady Olivia and you such as you are.

You do not explain, and I take it for granted you have good reasons for not explaining to me more fully, the immediate cause of your letter to Lady Olivia. I am sorry that any cause should have thrown her upon the protection of Mr. L——; for a man of honour and generosity feels himself bound to treat with tenderness a woman who appears to sacrifice every thing for his sake. Consider this in another point of view, and it will afford you subject of consolation; for it is always a consolation to good minds to think those whom they love less to blame than they appear to be. You will be more calm and patient when you reflect that your husband's absence may be prolonged by a mistaken sense of honour. From the nature of his connexion with Lady Olivia it cannot last long. Had she saved appearances, and engaged him in a sentimental affair, it might have been far more dangerous to your happiness.

I entirely approve of your conduct with respect to the prince: it is worthy of my child, and just what I should have expected from her. The artifices of coquettes, and all the *art* of love, are beneath her; she has far other powers and resources, and need not strive to maintain her dignity by vengeance. I admire your magnanimity, and I still more admire your good sense; for high spirit is more common in our sex than good sense. Few know how and when they should sacrifice small considerations to great ones. You say that you will not receive the prince in your husband's absence, though this may be attributed to prudery or vanity, &c. &c. You are quite right. How many silly women sacrifice the happiness of their lives to the idea of what women or men, as silly as themselves, will say or think of their motives. How many absurd heroines of romance, and of those who imitate them in real life, do we see, who can never act with common sense or presence of mind: if a man's carriage breaks down, or his horse is tired at the end of their avenues, or for some such ridiculous reason, they must do the very reverse of all they know to be prudent. Perpetually exposed, by a fatal concurrence of circumstances, to excite the jealousy of their lovers and husbands, they create the necessity to which they fall a victim. I rejoice that I cannot feel any apprehension

of my daughter's conducting herself like one of these novel-bred ladies.

I am sorry, my dear, that Lady M—— and your friends have left you: yet even in this there may be good. Your affairs will be made less public, and you will be less the subject of impertinent curiosity. I advise you, however, to mix as much as usual with your neighbours in the country: your presence, and the dignity of your manners, will impose silence upon idle tongues. No wife of real spirit solicits the world for compassion: she who does not court popularity ensures respect.

Adieu, my dearest child: the time will come when your husband will feel the full merit of your fortitude; when he will know how to distinguish between true and false sensibility; between the love of an Olivia and of a Leonora.

LETTER LIV.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

Jan. 26.

My dear Margaret,

I shall never forgive myself. I fear I have done Leonora irreparable injury; and, dear magnanimous sufferer, she has never reproached me! In a fit of indignation and imprudent zeal I made a discovery, which has produced a total breach between Leonora and Lady Olivia, and in consequence of this Mr. L—— has gone off with her ladyship * * * * *
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *
* * We have heard nothing from Mr. L—— since his departure, and Leonora is more unhappy than ever, and my imprudence is the cause of this. Yet she continues to love me. She is an angel! I have promised her not to mention her affairs in future even in any of my letters to you, dear Margaret. Pray quiet any reports you may hear, and stop idle tongues.

Yours affectionately,

Helen C——

LETTER LV.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

Richmond.

My dear Friend,

I do not think I could have borne with temper from any other man breathing the last letter which I received from you. I am sensible that it was written with the best intentions for my happiness; but I must now inform you, that the lady in question has accepted of my protection, and consequently no man who esteems me can treat her with disrespect.

It is no longer a question, what she will sacrifice for me; she has shown the greatest generosity and tenderness of soul; and I should despise myself, if I did not exert every power to make her happy.—We are at Richmond; but if you write, direct to me at my house in town.

Yours sincerely,

F. L——

LETTER LVI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Dream your dream out, my dear L——. Since you are angry with me, as Solander was with Sir Joseph Banks for awakening him, I shall not take the liberty of shaking you any more. I believe I shook you rather too roughly: but I assure you it was for your good, as people always tell their friends when they do the most disagreeable things imaginable. Forgive me, and I will let you dream in peace. You will however allow me to watch by you while you sleep; and, my dear somnambulist, I may just take care that you do not knock your head against a post, or fall into a well.

I hope you will not have any objection to my paying my respects to Lady Olivia when I come to town, which, I flatter myself, I shall be able to do shortly. The fortifications here are almost completed.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER LVII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Richmond, ——.

HAPPY!—No, my dear Gabrielle, nor shall I ever be happy, while I have not exclusive possession of the heart of the man I love. I have sacrificed every thing to him; I have a right to expect that he should sacrifice at least a wife for me—a wife whom he only esteems. But L—— has not sufficient strength of mind to liberate himself from the cobwebs which restrain those who talk of conscience, and who, in fact, are only superstitious. I see with indignation that his soul is continually struggling between passion for me and a something, I know not what to call it, that he feels for this wife. His thoughts are turning towards home. I believe that to an Englishman's ears there is some magic in the words *home* and *wife*. I used to think foreigners ridiculous for associating the ideas of milord Anglois with roast beef and pudding; but I begin to see that they are quite right, and that an Englishman has a certain set of inveterate *homely* prejudices, which are necessary to his well-being, and almost to his existence. You may entice him into the land of sentiment, and for a time keep him there; but, refine and polish and enlighten him as you will, he recurs to his own plain sense, as he terms it, on the first convenient opportunity. In short, it is lost labour to civilize him, for sooner or later he will *hottentot* again. Pray introduce that term, Gabrielle—*you* can translate it. For my part, I can introduce nothing here; my manière d'être is really insupportable; my talents are lost; I, who am accustomed to shine in society, see nobody; I might, as Josephine every day observes, as well be buried alive. Retirement and love are charming; but then it must be perfect love—not the equivocating sort that L—— feels for me, which keeps the word of promise only to the ear. I bear every sort of désagrément for him; I make myself a figure for the finger of scorn to point at, and he insults me with esteem for a wife! Can you conceive this, my amiable Gabrielle?—No, there are ridiculous points in the characters of my countrymen which

you will never be able to comprehend. And, what is still more incomprehensible, it is my fate to love this man; yes, passionately to love him!—But he must give me proof of reciprocal passion. I have too much spirit to sacrifice every thing for him, who will sacrifice nothing for me. Besides, I have another motive. To you, my faithful Gabrielle, I open my whole heart. —Pride inspires me as well as love. I am resolved that Leonora, the haughty Leonora, shall live to repent of having insulted and exasperated Olivia. In some situations contempt can be answered only by vengeance; and when the malice of a contracted and illiberal mind provokes it, revenge is virtue. Leonora has called me her enemy, and consequently has made me such. 'Tis she has declared the war! 'tis for me to decide the victory!

L——, I know, has the offer of an embassy to Petersburg.—He shall accept it.—I will accompany him thither. Lady Leonora may, in his absence, console herself with her august counsellor and mother: that proudest of earthly paragons is yet to be taught the extent of Olivia's power. Adieu, my charming Gabrielle! I will carry your tenderest remembrances to our brilliant Russian princess. She has often invited me, you know, to pay her a visit, and this will be the ostensible object of my journey. A horrible journey, to be sure!!! —But what will not love undertake and accomplish, especially when goaded by pride, and inspirited by great revenge? OLIVIA.

LETTER LVIII.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

VICTIM to the delusions of passion, too well I know my danger, and now, even now foresee my miserable fate. Too well I know that the delicious poison which spreads through my frame exalts, entrances, but to destroy. Too well I know that the meteor fire which shines so bright on my path entices me forward but to plunge me in the depths of infamy. The long warnings of recorded time teach me that perjured man triumphs, disdains, and abandons. Too well, alas! I know these fatal truths; too well I feel my approaching doom.

Yet, infatuated as I am, prescience avails not; the voice of prudence warns, the hand of Heaven beckons me in vain.

My friend! my more than friend, my lover! beloved beyond expression! you to whom I immolate myself, you for whom I sacrifice more than life, O whisper words of peace! for you, and you alone can tranquillize this agitated bosom. Assure me, L——, if with truth you can assure me, that I have no rival in your affections. O tell me that the name of wife does not invalidate the claims of love! Repeat for me, a thousand times repeat, that I am sole possessor of your heart!

The moment you quit me I am overpowered with melancholy forebodings. Scarcely are you out of my sight, before I dread that I should never see you more, or that some fatality should deprive me of your love. When shall the sails of love waft us from this dangerous shore? O! when shall I dare to call you mine? Heavens! how many things may intervene..... Let nothing detain you from Richmond this evening; but come not at all—come no more, unless to reassure my trembling heart, and to convince me that love and Olivia have banished every other image.

OLIVIA.

LETTER LIX.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I AM come to a resolution to accept of that embassy to Russia which I lately refused. My mind has been in such constant anxiety for some time past, that my health has suffered, and change of air and place are necessary to me. You will say, that the climate of Russia is a strange choice for an invalid; I could indeed have wished for a milder; but in this world we must be content with the least of two evils. I wish to have some ostensible reason for going abroad, and this embassy is the only one that presents itself in an unquestionable shape. Any thing is better than staying where I am, and *as* I am. My motives are not so entirely personal and selfish as I have stated them. A man who has a grain of feeling cannot endure to see the woman whom he

loves, whose only failing is her love, living in a state of dereliction, exposed to the silent scorn of her equals and inferiors, if not to open insult. All her fine talents, every advantage of nature and education sacrificed, and her sensibility to shame a perpetual source of misery. A man must be a brute if he do not feel for a woman whose affection for him has reduced her to this situation. My delicacy as to female manners, and the high value I set upon public opinion in all that concerns the sex, make me peculiarly susceptible and wretched in my present circumstances. To raise the drooping spirits, and support the self-approbation of a woman who is conscious that she has forfeited her claim to respect—to make love supply the place of all she has sacrificed to love, is a difficult and exquisitely painful task. My feelings render hers more acute, and the very precautions which I take, however delicate, alarm and wound her pride, by reminding her of all she wishes to forget. In this country no woman, who is not lost to shame, can bear to live without reputation.—I pass over a great many intermediate ideas, my dear general; your sense and feeling will supply them. You see the expediency, the necessity of my accepting this embassy. Olivia urges, how can I refuse it? She wishes to accompany me. She made this offer with such decision of spirit, with such passionate tenderness, as touched me to the very soul. A woman who really loves absolutely devotes herself, and becomes insensible to every difficulty and danger; to her all parts of the world are alike; all she fears is to be separated from the object of her affections.

But the very excess of certain passions proves them to be genuine. Even while we blame the rashness of those who act from the enthusiasm of their natures, while we foresee all the perils to which they seem blind, we tremble at their danger, we grow more and more interested for them every moment, we admire their courage, we long to snatch them from their fate, we are irresistibly hurried along with them down the precipice.

But why do I say all this to you, my dear general? To no man upon earth could it be more ineffectually addressed. Let me see you, however, before we leave England. It would be painful to me to quit this country without taking leave of you, notwithstanding all that you have lately done to thwart my inclinations, and

notwithstanding all I may expect you to say when we meet. Probably I shall be detained here some weeks, as I must wait for instructions from our court. I write this day to Lady Leonora, to inform her that I am appointed ambassador to Russia. She shall have all the honours of war; she shall be treated with all the respect to which she is so well entitled. I suppose she will wish to reside with her mother during my absence. She cannot do better: she will then be in the most eligible situation, and I shall be relieved from all anxiety upon her account. She will be perfectly happy with her mother. I have often thought that she was much happier before she married me than she has been since our union.

I have some curiosity to know whether she will see the prince when I am gone. Do not mistake me; I am not jealous: I have too little love, and too much esteem, for Leonora, to feel the slightest jealousy. I have no doubt, that if I were to stay in Russia for ten years, and if all the princes and potentates in Europe were to be at her feet, my wife would conduct herself with the most edifying propriety: but I am a little curious to know how far vanity or pride can console a virtuous woman for the absence of love.

Yours truly,
F. L.

LETTER LX.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

You are really decided then to go to Russia, my amiable friend, and you will absolutely undertake this horrible voyage! And you are not intimidated by the idea of the immense distance between Petersburg and Paris! Alas! I had hoped soon to see you again. The journey from my convent to Paris was the longest and most formidable that I ever undertook, and at this moment it appears to me terrible; you may conceive therefore my admiration of your courage and strength of mind, my dear Olivia, who are going to brave the ocean, turning your back on Paris, and every moment receding from our polished centre of attraction, to perish perhaps

among mountains of ice. Mon Dieu! it makes me shudder to think of it. But if it pleases Heaven that you should once arrive at Petersburg, you will crown your tresses with diamonds, you will envelop yourself with those superb furs of the north, and, smiling at all the dangers you have passed, you will be yourself a thousand times more dangerous than they. You, who have lived so long at Paris, who speak our language in all its shades of elegance; you, who have divined all our secrets of pleasing, who have caught our very air

"Et la grace, encore plus belle que la beauté;"

you, who are absolutely a French woman, and a Parisian, what a sensation you will produce at Petersburg! —Quels succès vous attendent!—Quels hommages!

You will have the goodness to offer my tenderest sentiments, and the assurances of my perfect respect, to our dear princess; you will also find the proper moment to remind her of the promise she made to send me specimens of the fine ermines and sables of her country. For my part, I used to be, I confess, in a great error with respect to furs: I always acknowledged them to be rich, but avoided them as heavy; I considered them as fitter for the stiff magnificence of an empress of all the Russias than for the light elegance of a Parisian beauty; but our charming princess convinced me that this is a heresy in taste. When I beheld the grace with which she wore her ermine, and the art with which she knew how to vary its serpent folds as she moved, or as she spoke; the variety it gave to her costume and attitudes; the development it afforded to a fine hand and arm, the resource in the pauses of conversation, and that soft and attractive air which it seemed to impart even to the play of her wit, I could no longer refuse my homage to ermine. Such is the despotism of beauty over all the objects of taste and fashion; and so it is, that a woman of sense, address, and sentiment, let her be born or thrown by fate where she may, will always know how to avail herself of every possible advantage of nature and art. Nothing will be too trifling or too vast for her genius.

I must make you understand me, my dear Olivia; your Gabrielle is not so frivolous as simpletons imagine. Frivolity is an excellent, because an unsuspected, mask, under which serious and important designs may be safely

concealed. I would explain myself further, but must now go to the opera to see the new ballet. Let me know, my interesting, my sublime Olivia, when you are positively determined on your voyage to Petersburg; and then you shall become acquainted with your friend as a politician. Her friendship for you will not be confined to a mere intercourse of sentiment, but will, if you have courage to second her views, give you a secret yet decisive weight and consequence, of which you have hitherto never dreamed. Adieu. These gentlemen are so impatient, I must go. Burn the last page of this letter, and the whole of my next as soon as you have read it, I conjure you, my dear.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

DEAR L——,

I HAVE time but to write one line to satisfy that philosophical curiosity, which, according to your injunctions, I will not denominate jealousy—except when I talk to myself.

You have a philosophical curiosity to know whether your wife will see the prince in your absence. I saw his favourite yesterday, who complained to me that his highness had been absolutely refused admittance at your castle, notwithstanding he had made many ingenious and some bold attempts to see Lady Leonora L—— in the absence of her faithless husband.

As to your scheme of going to Russia, you will be obliged, luckily, to wait for some time for instruction, and in the interval it is to be hoped you will recover your senses. I shall see you as soon as possible.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER LXII.

MADAME DE P—— TO LADY OLIVIA.

Paris.

As our vanity always endeavours to establish a balance between our own perfections and those of our friends, I must flatter myself, my dear Olivia, that in compensation for that courage and ardent imagination in which you are so much my superior, I possess some little advantages over you in my scientific, hereditary knowledge of court intrigue, and of the arts of representation; all which will be necessary to you in your character of ambassadress: you will in fact deserve this title, for of course you will govern the English ambassador, whom you honour with your love. And of course you will appear with splendour, and you will be particularly careful to have your *traineau* well appointed. Pray remember that one of your horses must gallop, while the other trots, or you are nobody. It will also be absolutely necessary to have a numerous retinue of servants, because this suits the Russian idea of magnificence. You must have, as the Russian nobles always had in Paris, four servants constantly to attend your equipage; one to carry the flambeau, another to open the door, and a couple to carry you into and out of your carriage. I beseech you to bear in mind perpetually that you are to be as helpless as possible. A Frenchman of my acquaintance, who spent nine years in Russia, told me, that in his first setting out at Petersburg, he was put on his guard in this particular by a speech of his Russian valet-de-chambre:—"Sir, the Englishman you visited to-day cannot be worthy of your acquaintance; he cannot be a gentleman. Son valet me dit qu'il se déshabille seul!!!"

I suppose you take Josephine with you; she will be an inestimable treasure; and I shall make it my business to send you the first advices of Paris fashions, which her talents will not fail to comprehend and execute. My charming Olivia! you will be the model of taste and elegance! Do not suspect that dress is carrying me away from politics. I assure you I know what I am about, and am going straight to my object. The art of

attending to trifles is the art of governing the world, as all historians know, who have gone to the bottom of affairs. Was not the face of Europe changed by a dish of tea thrown on Mrs. Masham's gown, as Voltaire with penetrating genius remarks? Women, without a doubt, understand the importance of trifles better than men do, and consequently always move in secret the slight springs of that vast machine, the civilized world. Is not your ambition roused, my Olivia? You must, however, lay aside a little of your romance, and not approach the political machine while you are intoxicated with love, else you will blunder infallibly, and do infinite and irreparable mischief to yourself and your friends.

Permit me to tell you, that you have been a little spoiled by sentimental novels, which are good only to talk of when one must show sensibility, but destructive as rules of action. By the false lights which these writers, who know nothing of the world, have thrown upon objects, you have been deluded; you have been led to mistake the means for the end. Love has been with you the sole end of love; whereas it ought to be the beginning of power. No matter for the past; the future is yours: at our age this future must be dexterously managed. A woman of spirit, and, what is better, of sense, must always take care that in her heart the age of love is not prolonged beyond the age of being beloved. In these times a woman has no choice at a certain period but politics, or bel-esprit; for devotion, which used to be a resource, is no longer in fashion. We must all take a part, my dear; I assure you I have taken mine decidedly, and I predict that you will take yours with brilliant success. How often must one cry in the ears of lovers—Love must die! must die! must die! But you, my dear Olivia, will not be deaf to the warning voice of common sense. Your own experience has on former occasions convinced you, that passion cannot be eternal; and at present, if I mistake not, there is in your love a certain mixture of other feelings, a certain alloy, which will make it happily ductile and manageable. When your triumph over the wife is complete, passion for the husband will insensibly decay; and this will be fortunate for you, because assuredly your ambassador would not choose to remain all the rest of his days in love and in exile at Petersburg. All

these English are afflicted with the maladie du pays; and, as you observe so well, the words home and wife have ridiculous but unconquerable power over their minds. What will become of you, my friend, when this Mr. L—— chooses to return to England to his castle, &c. ? You could not accompany him. You must provide in time against this catastrophe, or you will be a deserted, disgraced, undone woman, my dear friend.

No one should begin to act a romance who has not well considered the dénouement. It is a charming thing to mount with a friend in a balloon, amid crowds of spectators, who admire the fine spectacle, and applaud the courage of the aërostats; the losing sight of this earth, and the being in or above the clouds, must also be delightful: but the moment will come when the travellers descend, and then begins the danger; then they differ about throwing out the ballast, the balloon is rent in the quarrel, it sinks with frightful rapidity, and they run the hazard, like the poor Marquis d'Arlande, of being spitted upon the spire of the Invalides, or of being entangled among woods and briers—at last, alighting upon the earth, our adventurers, fatigued and bruised, and disappointed, come out of their shattered triumphal car, exposed to the derision of the changeable multitude.

Every thing in this world is judged of by success. Your voyage to Petersburg, my dear Olivia, must not be a mere adventure of romance; as a party of pleasure it would be ridiculous; we must make something more of it. Enclosed is a letter to a Russian nobleman, an old lover of mine, who I understand is in favour. He will certainly be at your command. He is a man possessed by the desire of having reputation among foreigners, vain of the preference of our sex, generous even to prodigality. By his means you will be immediately placed on an easy footing with all the leading persons of the Russian court. You will go on from one step to another, till you are at the height which I have in view. Now for my grand object.—No, not now—for I have forty little notes about nothings to write this morning. Great things hang upon these nothings, so they should not be neglected. I must leave you, my amiable Olivia, and defer my grand object till to-morrow.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXIII.

LEONORA TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

DEAR MOTHER,

THIS moment I have received a letter from Mr. L——. He has accepted of an embassy to Petersburg. I cannot guess by the few lines he has written, whether or not he wishes that I should accompany him. Most ardently I wish it; but if my offer should be refused, or if it should be accepted only because it could not be well refused; if I should be a burden, a restraint upon him, I should wish myself dead.

Perhaps he accepts of this embassy on purpose that he may leave me and take another person with him: or perhaps, dearest mother (I hardly dare to hope it)—perhaps he wishes to break off that connexion, and goes to Russia to leave temptation behind him. I know that this embassy was offered to him some weeks ago, and he had then no thoughts of accepting it. O that I could see into his heart—that heart which used to be always open to me! If I could discover what his wishes are, I should know what mine ought to be. I have thoughts of going to town immediately to see him; at least I may take leave of him. Do you approve of it? Write the moment you receive this: but I need not say that, for I am sure you will do so. Dearest mother, you have prophesied that his heart will return to me, and on this hope I live.

Your ever affectionate daughter,

LEONORA L——.

LETTER LXIV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO LEONORA.

YES, my dear, I advise you by all means to go to town, and to see your husband. Your desire to accompany him to Russia he will know before you see him, for I have just written and despatched an express to him with your last letter, and with all those which I have received from you within these last six months. Leave Mr. L—— time to read them before he sees you; and do not hurry or fatigue yourself unnecessarily. You know that an embassy cannot be arranged in two days; therefore travel by easy journeys: you cannot do otherwise without hazard. Your courage in offering to undertake this long voyage with your husband is worthy of you, my beloved daughter. God bless and preserve you! If you go to Petersburg, let me know in time, that I may see you before you leave England. I will be at any moment at any place you appoint.

Your affectionate mother,

———.

LETTER LXV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO MR. L——,

PERHAPS this letter may find you at the feet of your mistress. Spare me, sir, a few moments from your pleasures. You may perhaps expect reproaches from the mother of your wife; but let me assure you that you have none to apprehend. For my daughter's sake, if not for yours, I would forbear. Never was departing love recalled by the voice of reproach; you shall not hear it from me, you have not heard it from Leonora. But mistake not the cause of her forbearance; let it not be attributed to pusillanimity of temper, or insensibility of heart.

Enclosed I send you all the letters which my daughter has written to me from the first day of her acquaintance with Lady Olivia to this hour. From these you will be enabled to judge of what she has felt for some months

past, and of the actual state of her heart; you will see all the tenderness and all the strength of her soul.

It has ever been my fixed opinion, that a wife who loves her husband, and who has possessed his affections, may reclaim them from the lure of the most artful of her sex, by persevering kindness, temper, and good sense, unless indeed her husband be a fool or a libertine. I have prophesied that my daughter will regain your heart; and upon this prophecy, to use her own expression, she lives. And even now, when its accomplishment is far removed, I am so steady in my opinion of her and of you,—so convinced of the uniform result of certain conduct upon the human mind, that undismayed I repeat my prophecy.

Were you to remain in this kingdom, I should leave things to their natural course; I should not interfere so far even as to send you Leonora's letters: but as you may be separated for years, I think it necessary now to put into your hands incontrovertible proofs of what she is, and what she has been. Do not imagine that I am so weak as to expect that the perusal of these letters will work a sudden change: but it is fit, that before you leave England you should know that Leonora is not a cold, sullen, or offended wife; but one who loves you most tenderly, most generously; who, concealing the agony of her heart, waits with resignation for the time when she will be your refuge, and the permanent blessing of your life.

———.

LETTER LXVI.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

And now, my charming Olivia, raise your fine eyes as high as ambition can look, and you will perhaps discover my grand object. You do not see it yet. Look again. Do you not see the Emperor of Russia? What would you think of him for a lover? If it were only for novelty's sake, it would really be pleasant to have a czar at one's feet. Reign in his heart, and you in fact seat yourself invisibly on the throne of all the Russias: thence what a commanding prospect you have of the

affairs of Europe! and how we should govern the world at our ease! The project is bold, but not impracticable. The ancients represent Cupid riding the Numidian lion; and why should he not tame the Russian bear? It would make a pretty design for a vignette. I can engrave as well as La Pompadour could at least, and anticipating your victory, my charming Olivia, I will engrave Cupid leading the bear in a chain of flowers. This shall be my seal. Mon cachet de faveur.

Courage, my fair politician! You have a difficult task; but the glory is in proportion to the labour; and those who value power properly are paid by its acquisition for all possible fatigue and hardships. With your knowledge of our modes, you will be at Petersburg the arbitress of delights. You have a charming taste and invention for fêtes and spectacles. Teach these people to vary their pleasures. Their monarch must adore you, if you banish from his presence that most dreadful enemy of kings, and most obstinate resident of courts, *ennui*. Trust, my Olivia, neither to your wit, nor your beauty, nor your accomplishments, but employ your "various arts of trifling prettily," and, take my word for it, you will succeed.

As I may not have an opportunity of sending you another private letter, and as lemon-juice, goulard, and all those sympathetic inks are subject to unlucky accidents, I must send you all my secret instructions by the present safe conveyance.

You must absolutely sacrifice, my dear child, all your romantic notions, and all your taste for love, to the grand object. The czar must not have the slightest cause for jealousy. These czars make nothing, you know, of cutting off their mistresses' pretty heads upon the bare suspicion of an intrigue. But you must do what is still more difficult than to be constant, you must yield your will, and, what is more, you must never let this czar guess that his will is not always your pleasure. Your humour, your tastes, your wishes must be incessantly and with alacrity sacrificed to his. You must submit to the constraint of eternal court ceremony and court dissimulation. You must bear to be surrounded with masks, instead of the human face divine; and instead of fellow-creatures, you must content yourself with puppets. You will have the amusement of pulling the wires: but remember that you must wear a mask

perpetually, as well as others, and never attempt to speak, and never expect to hear the language of truth or of the heart. You must not be the dupe of attachment in those who call themselves friends, or zealous and affectionate servants, &c. &c. You must have sufficient strength of character to bear continually in mind that all these professions are mere words, that all these people are alike false, and actuated but by one motive—self-interest. To secure yourself from secret and open enemies, you must further have sufficient courage to live without a friend or a confidante, for such persons at court are only spies—traitors in the worst forms. All this is melancholy and provoking, to be sure; but all this you must see without feeling, or at least without showing a spark of indignation. A sentimental misanthropist, male or female, is quite out of place at court. You must see all that is odious and despicable in human nature in a comic point of view; and you must consider your fellow-creatures as objects to be laughed at, not to be hated. Laughter, besides being good for the health, and consequently for the complexion, always implies superiority. Without this gratification to our vanity there would be no possibility of enduring that eternal penance of hypocrisy, and that solitary state of suspicion, to which the ambitious condemn themselves. I fear, my romantic Olivia, that you, who are a person used to yield to first impressions, and not quite accustomed to subdue your passions to your interest, will think that politics require too much from you, almost as much as constancy or religion. But consider the difference! for heaven's sake, my dear, consider the greatness of our object! Would to God that I had the eloquence of Bossuet, and I would make you a convert from love and a proselyte to glory. Dare, my Olivia, to be a martyr to ambition! See! already high in air she holds a crown over your head—it is almost within your grasp—stretch out your white arm and seize it—fear not the thorns!—every crown has thorns—but who upon that account ever yet refused one? My dear empress, I have the honour to kiss your powerful hands.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXVII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

My dear Friend,

You need not hurry yourself to come to town on my account, for by this change of ministry my embassy will be delayed some weeks.

A few days ago this delay would have been a terrible disappointment to me; yet now I feel it a respite. A respite! you will exclaim. Yes, my dear friend—so it is. Such is the heart of man!—so changeable, so contradictory, so much at variance with itself from day to day, from hour to hour. I believe, from what I now feel, that every man under the dominion of passion is reduced to a most absurd and miserable condition. I have just been reading some letters from Leonora, which have wrung my heart; letters addressed to her mother, laying open every feeling of her mind for some months. My dear friend, what injustice have I done to this admirable woman! With what tenderness, with what delicacy has she loved me! while I, mistaking modesty for coldness, fortitude for indifference, have neglected, injured, and abandoned her! With what sweetness of temper, with what persevering goodness has she borne with me, while, intoxicated with passion, I saw every thing in a false point of view! How often have I satisfied myself with the persuasion that she scarcely observed my attachment to Olivia, or beheld it unconcerned, secure by the absence of love from the pangs of jealousy! How often have I accused her of insensibility, while her heart was in tortures! Olivia was deceived also, and confirmed me in this cruel error. And all that time Leonora was defending her rival, and pleading her cause! With what generosity, with what magnanimity she speaks of Olivia in those letters! Her confidence was unbounded, her soul above suspicion; to the very last she doubted and blamed herself—dear, amiable woman! blamed herself for our faults, for feeling that jealousy which no wife who loved as she did could possibly subdue. She never betrayed it by a single word or look of reproach. Even though she

fainted at that cursed fête champêtre, yet the moment she came to her senses, she managed so that none of the spectators could suspect she thought Olivia was her rival. My dear general, you will forgive me—as long as I praise Leonora you will understand me. At last you will acknowledge that I do justice to the merits of my wife. Justice! no—I am unworthy of her. I have no heart like hers to offer in return for such love. She wishes to go with me to Petersburg; she has forborne to make this offer directly to me; but I know it from her last letter to her mother, which now lies before me. How can I refuse?—and how can I accept? My soul is torn with violence different ways. How can I leave Leonora; and how can I tear myself from Olivia!—even if her charms had no power over my heart, how could I with honour desert the woman who has sacrificed every thing for me! I will not shield myself from you, my friend, behind the word honour. See me as you have always seen me, without disguise, and now without defence. I respect, I love Leonora—but, alas! I am in love with Olivia!

Yours ever,
F. L——.

LETTER LXVIII.

MR. L—— TO OLIVIA.

Triumphant as you are over my heart, dear enchanting Olivia! you cannot make me false. I cannot, even to appease your anger, deny this morning what I said last night. It is inconsistent with all your professions, with your character, with your generous disposition, to desire me to "*abjure Leonora for ever!*" it would be to render myself for ever unworthy of Olivia. I am convinced, that had you read the letters of which I spoke, you would have been touched, you would have been struck by them as I was: instead of being hurt and displeased by the impression that they made upon me, you would have sympathized in my feelings, you would have been indignant if I had not admired, you would have detested and despised me if I could have been insensible to "*so much goodness and generosity.*" I repeat my words: I will not "*retract,*" I

cannot "*repent of them.*" My dear Olivia! when you reflect upon what is past, I am persuaded you will acknowledge that your sensibility made you unjust. Indeed, my love, you did not show your usual candour; I had just read all that Leonora had written of you, all that she had urged against her mother in your defence, even when she had most cause to be irritated against us; I could not avoid being shocked by the different manner in which you spoke of her. Perhaps I told you so too abruptly: if I had loved you less, I should have been more cautious and more calm—if I had esteemed you less, calmer still. I could then, possibly, have borne to hear you speak in a manner unbecoming yourself. Forgive me the pain I gave you—the pain I now give you, my dearest Olivia! My sincerity is the best security you can have for my future love. Banish therefore this unjust, this causeless jealousy: moderate this excessive sensibility for both our sakes, and depend upon the power you have over my heart. You cannot conceive how much I have felt from this misunderstanding—the first we have ever had. Let it be the last. I have spent a sleepless night. I am detained in town by provoking, tiresome, but necessary business. Meet me in the evening with smiles, my Olivia: let me behold in those fascinating eyes their wonted expression, and hear from your voice its usual, its natural tone of tenderness and love.

Ever devotedly yours,
F. L——.

LETTER LXIX.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

You have spoken daggers to me! Come not to Richmond this evening! I cannot—will not see you! Not for the universe would I see you with my present feelings!

Write to me more letters like that which I have just received. Dip your pen in gall; find words more bitter than those which you have already used. Accuse me of want of candour, want of generosity, want of every amiable, every estimable quality. Upbraid me with the loss of all of which you have bereft me. Recollect

every sacrifice that I have made, and, if you can, imagine every sacrifice that I would still make for you—peace of mind, friends, country, fortune, fame, virtue; name them all, and triumph—and disdain your triumph! Remind me how low I am fallen—sink me lower still—insult, debase, humble me to the dust. Exalt my rival, unroll to my aching eyes the emblazoned catalogue of her merits, her claims to your esteem, your affection; number them over, dwell upon those that I have forfeited, those which can never be regained; tell me that such merits are above all price; assure me that beyond all her sex you respect, you admire, you love your wife; say it with enthusiasm, with fire in your eyes, with all the energy of passion in your voice; then bid me sympathize in your feelings—bid me banish jealousy—wonder at my alarm—call my sorrow anger—conjure me to restrain my sensibility! Restrain my sensibility! Unhappy Olivia! he is tired of your love. Let him then at once tell me the dreadful truth, and I will bear it. Any evil is better than uncertainty, than lingering hope. Drive all hope from my mind. Bid me despair and die—but do not stretch me on the rack of jealousy!—Yet if such be your cruel pleasure, enjoy it. Determine how much I can endure and live. Stop just at the point when human nature sinks, that you may not lose your victim, that she may linger on from day to day, your sport and your derision.

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXX.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

You will rejoice to hear that Olivia and I have been in a state of warfare for some days past, and you will be still more pleased when you learn the cause of our quarrel. On the day that I had been reading Leonora's letters I was rather later at Richmond than usual. Olivia, offended, insisted upon knowing by what I could possibly have been detained. Her anger knew no bounds when she heard the truth. She made use of some expressions, in speaking of my wife, which I could not, I hope, have borne at any time, but which shocked me

beyond measure at that moment. I defended Leonora with warmth. Olivia, in a scornful tone, talked of my wife's coldness of disposition, and bade me compare Lady Leonora's love with hers. It was a comparison I had it more in my power to make than Olivia was aware of; it was the most disadvantageous moment for her in which that comparison could be made. She saw or suspected my feelings, and perceived that all she had said of my Leonora's *incapability of loving* produced an effect directly contrary to her expectations. Transported by jealousy, she then threw out hints respecting the prince. I spoke as I felt, indignantly. I know not precisely what I said, but Olivia and I parted in anger. I have since received a passionately fond note from her. But I feel unhappy. Dear general, when will you come to town?

Yours truly,

F. L——.

LETTER LXXI.

MRS. C—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

My dear Madam,

Your grace's cautions and entreaties to Lady Leonora not to over-exert and fatigue herself were, alas! as ineffectual as mine. From the time she heard that Mr. L—— had accepted this embassy to Petersburg, she was so eager to set out on her journey to town, and so impatient to see him, that neither her mind nor her body had one moment's tranquillity. She waited with indescribable anxiety for your grace's answer to her letter; and the instant she was secure of your approbation, her carriage was ordered to the door. I saw that she was ill; but she would not listen to my fears; she repeated with triumph, that her mother made no objection to her journey, and that she had no apprehensions for herself. However, she was obliged at last to yield. The carriage was actually at the door, when she was forced to submit to be carried to her bed. For several hours she was in such danger that I never expected she could live till this day. Thank God! she is now safe. Her infant, to her great delight, is a boy: she was extremely anxious to have a son, because Mr. L.—— formerly wished for one so much. She forbids me to write to Mr. L——,

lest I should communicate the account of her *sudden ill ness* too abruptly.

She particularly requests that your grace will mention to him this *accident* in the least alarming manner possible. I shall write again next post. Lady Leonora has now fallen asleep, and seems to sleep quietly. Who should sleep in peace if she cannot! I never saw her equal.

My dear madam,
I am,
With respect and attachment,
Your grace's
Sincerely affectionate,
HELEN C——.

It is with extreme concern I am forced to add, that since I wrote this letter the child has been so ill that I have fears for his life.—His poor mother!

LETTER LXXII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

is upon velvet again. Poor Olivia was excesshurt by my letter: she was ill for two days—seriously ill. Yesterday I at length obtained admittance. Olivia was all softness, all candour: she acknowledged that she had been wrong; and in so sweet a voice! She blamed herself till I could no longer think her blameable. She seemed so much humbled and depressed, such a tender melancholy appeared in her bewitching eyes, that I could not resist the fascination. I certainly gave her some cause for displeasure that unfortunate evening; for as Olivia has strong passions and exquisite sensibility, I should not have been so abrupt. A fit of jealousy may seize the best and most generous mind, and may prompt to what it would be incapable of saying or thinking in dispassionate moments. I am sure that Olivia has, upon reflection, felt more pain from this affair than I have. My Russian embassy is still in *abeyance*. Ministers seem to know their own minds as little as I know mine. Ambition has its quarrels and follies as well as love. At all events, I shall not leave England till next

month; and I shall not go down to L—— Castle till I have received my last instructions from our court, and till the day for my sailing is fixed. The parting with Leonora will be a dreadful difficulty. I cannot think of it steadily. But as she herself says, "is it not better that she should lose a year of my affections than a life?" The duchess is mistaken in imagining it possible that any woman, let her influence be ever so great over my heart, could prejudice me against my amiable, my admirable wife. What has just passed between Olivia and me convinces me that it is impossible. She has too much knowledge of my character to hazard in future a similar attempt. No, my dear friend, be assured I would not suffer it. I have not yet lost all title to your esteem or to my own. This enchantress may intoxicate me with her cup, but shall never degrade me; and I should feel myself less degraded even by losing the human form than by forfeiting that principle of honour and virtue which more nobly distinguishes man from brute.

Yours most sincerely,

F. L——

LETTER LXXIII.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

My dear Friend,

It is well that I did not answer your letter of Saturday before I received that of Monday. My congratulations upon your quarrel with your fair one might have come just as you were kissing hands upon a reconciliation.

I have often found a great convenience in writing a bad hand; my letters are so little like what they are intended for, and have among them such equality of unintelligibility, that each seems either; and, with the slightest alteration, each will stand and serve for the other. My *m*, *n*, and *u* are convertible letters: so are the terms and propositions of your present mode of reasoning, my dear L——, and I perceive that you find your account in it. Upon this I congratulate you; and I congratulate Lady Leonora upon your being detained some weeks longer in England. Those who have a just cause need never pray for victory; they need

only ask the gods for time. Time always brings victory to truth, and shame to falsehood. But you are not worthy of such fine apothegms. At present, "You are not fit to hear yourself convinced." I will wait for a better opportunity, and have patience with you, if I can.

You seem to plume yourself mightily upon your resolve to do justice to the merits of your wife, and upon the courage you have shown in stuffing cotton into your ears to prevent your listening to the voice of the syren; but pray take the cotton out, and hear all she can say or sing. Lady Leonora cannot be hurt by any thing Olivia can say; but her own malice may destroy herself.

In the mean time, as you tell me that you are upon velvet again, I am to presume that you are perfectly at ease; and I should be obliged to you if, as often as you can find leisure, you would send me bulletins of your happiness. I have never yet been in love with one of these high-flown heroines, and I am really curious to know what degree of felicity they can bestow upon a man of common sense. I should be glad to profit by the experience of a friend.

Yours truly,
J. B.

LETTER LXXIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Richmond.

Accept my sincere thanks, inimitable Gabrielle, for having taken off my hands a lover who really has half-wearied me to death. If you had dealt more frankly with me, I could, however, have saved you much superfluous trouble and artifice. I now perfectly comprehend the cause of poor R***'s strange silence some months ago. He was then under the influence of your charms, and it was your pleasure to deceive me, even when there was no necessity for dissimulation. You knew the secret of my growing attachment to L——, and must have foreseen that R*** would be burdensome to me. You needed therefore only to have treated me with candour, and you would have gained a lover without losing a friend:

but Mad. de P—— is too accomplished a politician to go the simple straight road to her object. I now perfectly comprehend why she took such pains to persuade me that an imperial lover was alone worthy of my charms. She was alarmed by an imaginary danger. Believe me, I am incapable of disputing with any one *les restes d'un cœur.*

Permit me to assure you, madam, that your incomparable talents for explanation will be utterly thrown away on me in future. I am in possession of the whole truth, from a person whose information I cannot doubt. I know the precise date of the commencement of your connexion with R***; so that you must perceive it will be impracticable to make me believe that you have not betrayed my easy confidence.

I cannot, however, without those pangs of sentiment which your heart will never experience, reflect upon the treachery, the perfidy of one who has been my bosom friend. Return my letters, Gabrielle. With this you will receive certain *souvenirs*, at which I could never henceforward look without sighing. I return you that ring I have so long worn with delight, the picture of that treacherous eye,* which you know so well how to use. Adieu, Gabrielle. The illusion is over. How many of the illusions of my fond heart have been dispelled by time and treachery!

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXXV.

MADAME DE P—— TO MONSIEUR R***.

Paris,——, 18—.

I HAVE just received the most extravagant letter imaginable from your Olivia. Really you may congratulate yourself, my dear friend, upon having recovered your liberty. 'Twere better to be a galley-slave at once than to be bound to please a woman for life, who knows not what she would have either in love or friendship. Can you conceive any thing so absurd as her upbraiding me with treachery, because I know the value of a heart of which she tells me she was more than half-tired? as if

* Certain ladies at this time carried pictures of the eyes of their favourites.

I were to blame for her falling in love with Mr. L——, and as if I did not know the whole progress of her inconstancy. Her letters to me give a new history of the birth and education of Love. Here we see Love born of Envy, nursed by *Ennui*, and dandled in turn by all the Vices.

And this Lady Olivia fancies that she is a perfect Frenchwoman! There is nothing we Parisians abhor and ridicule so much as these foreign, and always awkward caricatures of our manners. With us there are many who, according to a delicate distinction, lose their virtue without losing their taste for virtue; but I flatter myself there are few who resemble Olivia entirely—who have neither the virtues of a man nor of a woman. One cannot even say that "her head is the dupe of her heart," since she has no heart. But enough of such a tiresome and incomprehensible subject.

How I overvalued that head, when I thought it could ever be fit for politics! 'Tis well we did not commit ourselves. You see how prudent I am, my dear R***, and how much those are mistaken who think that we women are not fit to be trusted with secrets of state. Love and politics make the best mixture in the world. Adieu. Victoire summons me to my toilet.

GABRIELLE DE P——

LETTER LXXVI.

MADAME DE P—— TO LADY OLIVIA.

Paris, —— 18—.

REALLY, my dear Olivia, this is too childish. What! make a complaint in form against me for taking a lover off your hands when you did not know what to do with him! Do you quarrel in England every time you change partners in a country-dance? But I must be serious; for the high-sounding words *treachery* and *perfidy* are surely sufficient to make anybody grave. Seriously, then, if you are resolved to be tragical, *et de me faire une scène*, I must submit, console myself, and, above all things, take care not to be ridiculous.

Your letters, as you desire it so earnestly, and with so much reason, shall be returned by the first safe conveyance; but excuse me if I forbear to restore your *sou-*

venirs. With us Parisians this returning of keepsakes has been out of fashion since the days of Molière and *Le dépit amoureux.*

Adieu, my charming Olivia! I embrace you tenderly, I was going to say; but I believe, according to your English etiquette, I must now conclude with

I have the honour to be,
Madam,
Your most obedient,
Humble servant,
GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXXVII.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Tuesday morning.

COME not to Richmond to-day; I am not in spirits to see you, my dearest L——. Allow me to indulge my melancholy retired from every human eye.

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXXVIII.

FROM LADY OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Tuesday evening.

"EXPLAIN to you the cause of my melancholy!"—Vain request!—cruel as vain! Your ignorance of the cause too well justifies my sad presentiments. Were our feelings in unison, as once they were, would not every chord of your heart vibrate responsively to mine?

With me love is an absorbing vortex of the soul, into which all other thoughts, feelings, and ideas are irresistibly impelled; with you it is but as the stranger stream that crosses the peaceful lake, and as it flows wakens only the surface of the slumbering waters, communicating to them but a temporary agitation. With you, my dear, but too tranquil-minded friend, love is but one amid the vulgar crowd of pleasures; it concentrates not your ideas, it entrances not your faculties; it is not, as in my heart, the supreme delight, which renders all others tasteless, the only blessing which can make life

supportable; the sole, sufficient object of existence. Alas! how cruelly different is the feeble attachment that I have inspired from that all-powerful sentiment to which I live a victim! Countless symptoms, by you unheeded, mark to my love-watchful eye the decline of passion. How often am I secretly shocked by the cold carelessness of your words and manner! How often does the sigh burst from my bosom, the tear fall from my eye, when you have left me at leisure to recall, by memory's torturing power, instances of your increasing indifference! Seek not to calm my too well-founded fears. Professions, with all their unmeaning, inanimate formality, but irritate my anguish. Permit me to indulge, to feed upon my grief in silence. Ask me no more to explain to you the cause of my melancholy. Too plainly, alas! I feel it is beyond my utmost power to endure it. Amiable Werter—divine St. Preux—you would sympathize in my feelings! Sublime Göethe—all eloquent Rousseau—you alone could feel as I do, and you alone could paint my anguish.

The miserable

OLIVIA

LETTER LXXIX.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

EXPECT no bulletin of happiness from me, my friend. I find it impossible to make Olivia happy. She has superior talents, accomplishments, beauty, grace, all that can attract and fascinate the human heart—that could triumph over every feeling, every principle that opposed her power: she lives with the man she loves, and yet she is miserable.

Rousseau, it has been said, never really loved any woman but his own Julie; I have lately been tempted to think that Olivia never really loved any man but St. Preux. Werter, perhaps, and some other German heroes, might dispute her heart even with St. Preux; but as for me, I begin to be aware that I am loved only as a feeble resemblance of those divine originals (to whom, however, my character bears not the slightest similarity), and I am often indirectly, and sometimes directly,

reproached with my inferiority to imaginary models. But how can a plain Englishman hope to reach

"The high sublime of deep absurd?"

I am continually reviled for not using a romantic language, which I have never learned; and which, as far as I can judge, is foreign to all natural feeling. I wish to make Olivia happy. There is nothing I would not do to satisfy her of my sincerity; but nothing I can do will suffice. She has a sort of morbid sensibility, which is more alive to pain than pleasure, more susceptible of jealousy than of love. No terms are sufficiently strong to convince her of my affection. but an unguarded word makes her miserable for hours. She requires to be agitated by violent emotions, though they exhaust her mind, and leave her spiritless and discontented. In this alternation of rapture and despair all her time passes. As she says of herself, she has no soul but for love: she seems to think it a crime against sentiment to admit of relief from common occupations or indifferent subjects; with a sort of superstitious zeal she excludes all thoughts but those which relate to one object, and in this spirit of amorous mysticism she actually makes a penance even of love. I am astonished that her heart can endure this variety of self-inflicted torments. What will become of Olivia when she ceases to love and be loved? And what passion can be durable which is so violent as hers, and to which no respite is allowed? No affection can sustain these hourly trials of suspicion and reproach.

Jealousy of Leonora has taken such possession of Olivia's imagination, that she misinterprets all my words and actions. By restraining my thoughts, by throwing obstacles in the way of my affection for my wife, she stimulates and increases it; she forces upon me continually those comparisons which she dreads. Till I knew Olivia more intimately than the common forms of a first acquaintance, or the illusions of a treacherous passion permitted, her defects did not appear; but now that I suffer, and that I see her suffer daily, I deplore them bitterly. Her happiness rests and weighs heavily on my honour. I feel myself bound to consider and to provide for the happiness of the woman who has sacrificed to me all independent means of felicity. A man

without honour or humanity may perhaps finish an intrigue as easily as he can begin it; but this is not exactly the case of your imprudent friend,

F. L——.

LETTER LXXX.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Wednesday.

Ay, ay! just as I thought it would be. This is all the comfort, my dear friend, that I can give you; all the comfort that wise people usually afford their friends in distress. Provided things happen just as they predicted, they care but little what is suffered in the accomplishment of their prophecies. But seriously, my dear L——, I am not sorry that you are in a course of vexation. The more you see of your charmer the better. She will allay your intoxication by gentle degrees, and send you sober home. Pray keep in the course you have begun, and preserve your patience as long as possible. I should be sorry that you and Olivia quarrelled violently, and parted in a passion: such quarrels of lovers are proverbially the renewal of love.

"Il faut délier l'amitié, il faut couper l'amour"

In some cases this maxim may be just, but not in the present instance. I would rather wait till the knot is untied than cut it; for when once you see the art with which it was woven, a similar knot can never again perplex you.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER LXXXI.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond, Saturday.

You presume too much upon your power over my heart, and upon the softness of my nature. Know that I have spirit as well as tenderness—a spirit that will

neither be injured nor insulted with impunity. You were amazed, you say, by the violence which I showed yesterday. Why did you provoke that violence by opposing the warmest wish of my heart? and with a calmness that excited my tenfold indignation! Imagine not that I am a tame, subjugated female, to be treated with neglect if I remonstrate, and caressed as the price of obedience. Fancy not that I am one of your chimney-corner, household goddesses, doomed to the dull uniformity of domestic worship, destined to be adored, to be hung with garlands, or undeified or degraded with indignity! I have been accustomed to a different species of worship; and the fondness of my weak heart has not yet sunk me so low, and rendered me so abject, that I cannot assert my rights. You tell me that you are unconscious of giving me any just cause of offence. Just cause!—How I hate the cold accuracy of your words! This single expression is sufficient offence to a heart like mine. You entreat me to be reasonable. Reasonable!—Did ever man talk of reason to a woman he loved? When once a man has recourse to reason and precision, there is an end of love. No just cause of offence!—What, have I no cause to be indignant, when I find you thus trifle with my feelings, postpone from week to week, and month to month, our departure from this hateful country—

> "Bid me hope on from day to day,
> And wish and wish my soul away!"

Yes, you know it to be the most ardent wish of my soul to leave England; you know that I cannot enjoy a moment's peace of mind while I am here; yet in this racking suspense it is your pleasure to detain me. No, it shall not be—this shall not go on! It is in vain you tell me that the delay originates not with you, that you must wait for instructions and I know not what—paltry diplomatic excuses!

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXXXII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

Richmond.

Amuse yourself, my good general, at my expense; I know that you are seriously interested for my happiness; but the way is not quite so clear before me as you imagine. It is extremely easy to be philosophic for our friends; but difficult to be so for ourselves when our passions are concerned. Indeed, this would be a contradiction in terms; you might as well talk of a cold sun, or of hot ice, as of a philosopher falling in love, or of a man in love being a philosopher. You say that Olivia will wear out my passion, and that her defects will undo the work of her charms. I acknowledge that she sometimes ravels the web she has woven; but she is miraculously expeditious and skilful in repairing the mischief: the magical tissue again appears firm as ever, glowing with brighter colours and exhibiting finer forms.

In plain prose, my dear friend—for as you are not in love, you will find it difficult to follow my poetic flights—in plain prose, I must confess that Olivia has the power to charm and touch my heart even after she has provoked me to the utmost verge of human patience. She knows her power, and I am afraid this tempts her to abuse it. Her temper, which formerly appeared to me all feminine gentleness, is now irritable and violent; but I am persuaded that this is not her natural disposition; it is the effect of her present unhappy state of mind. Tortured by remorse and jealousy, if in the height of their paroxysms Olivia make me suffer from their fury, is it for me to complain? I, who caused, should at least endure the evil.

Every thing is arranged for my embassy, and the day is fixed for our leaving England. I go down to L—— Castle next week.

Your faithful
F. L——.

LETTER LXXXIII.

JOSEPHINE TO VICTOIRE MAD. DE P——'S WOMAN.

Richmond.

I AM in despair, dear Victoire; and unless your genius can assist me, absolutely undone! Here is this romantic lady of mine determined upon a journey to Russia with her new English lover. What whims ladies take into their heads, and how impossible it is to make them understand reason! I have been labouring in vain to convince my Lady Olivia that this is the most absurd scheme imaginable: and I have repeated to her all I learned from Lady F——'s women, who are just returned from Petersburg, and whom I met at a party last night, all declaring they would rather die a thousand deaths than go through again what they have endured. Such seas of ice! such going in sledges! such barbarians! such beds! and scarcely a looking-glass! And nothing fit to wear but what one carries with one, and God knows how long we may stay. At Petersburg the coachmen's ears are frozen off every night on their boxes waiting for their ladies. And there are bears and wild beasts, I am told, howling with their mouths wide open night and day in the forests which we are to pass through; and even in the towns the men, I hear, are little better, for it is the law of the country for the men to beat their wives, and many wear long beards. How horrid!—My Lady F——'s woman, who is a Parisian born, and very pretty, if her eyes were not so small, and better dressed than her lady always, except diamonds, assures me upon her honour she never had a civil thing said to her while she was in Russia, except by one or two Frenchmen in the suite of the ambassadors.

These Russians think of nothing but drinking brandy, and they put pepper into it! Mon Dieu, what savages! Put pepper into brandy! But that is inconceivable! Positively, I will never go to Petersburg. And yet if my lady goes, what will become of me? for you know my sentiments for Brunel, and he is decided to accompany my lady; so I cannot stay behind.

But absolutely I am shocked at this intrigue with Mr

L——, and my conscience reproaches me terribly with being a party concerned in it; for in this country an affair of gallantry between married people is not so light a thing as with us. Here wives sometimes love their husbands seriously, as if they were their lovers; and my Lady Leonora L—— is one of this sort of wives. She is very unhappy, I am told. One day at L—— Castle, I assure you my heart quite bled for her, when she gave me a beautiful gown of English muslin, little suspecting me then to be her enemy. She is certainly very unsuspicious, and very amiable, and I wish to heaven her husband would think as I do, and take her with him to Petersburg, instead of carrying off my Lady Olivia and me! Adieu, mon chou! Embrace everybody I know tenderly for me. JOSEPHINE.

LETTER LXXXIV.

MRS. C—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I BELIEVE, when I wrote last to your grace, I said that I had no hopes of the child's life. From the moment of his birth there was but little probability of his being any thing but a source of misery to his mother. I cannot, on her account, regret that the struggle is over. He expired this morning. My poor friend had hopes to the last, though I had none; and it was most painful and alarming to see the feverish anxiety with which she watched over her little boy, frequently repeating, "Mr. L—— used to wish so much for a son.—I hope the boy will live to see his father."

Last night, partly by persuasion, partly by compulsion, I prevailed with her to let the child be taken out of her room. This morning, as soon as it was light, I heard her bell ring; the poor little thing was at that moment in convulsions; and knowing that Lady Leonora rang to inquire for it, I went to prepare her mind for what I knew must be the event. The moment I came into the room she looked eagerly in my face, but did not ask me any questions about the child. I sat down by the side of her bed; but without listening to what I said about her own health, she rang her bell again, more violently than before. Susan came in. "Susan! with-

out my child!"—said she, starting up. Susan hesitated, but I saw by her countenance that it was all over—so did Lady Leonora. She said not a word, but drawing her curtain suddenly, she lay down, and never spoke or stirred for three hours. The first words she said afterward were to me:

"You need not move so softly, my dear Helen; I am not asleep. Have you my mother's last letter? I think my mother says that she will be here to-morrow. She is very kind to come to me. Will you be so good as to write to her immediately, and send a servant with your letter as soon as you can to meet her on the road, that she may not be *surprised* when she arrives?"

Lady Leonora is now more composed and more like herself than she has been for some time past. I rejoice that your grace will so soon be here, because you will be her best possible consolation; and I do not know any other person in the world who could have sufficient influence to prevent her from attempting to set out upon a journey before she can travel with safety. To do her justice, she has not hinted that such were her intentions; but still I know her mind so well that I am certain what her thoughts are, and what her actions would be. Most ladies talk more than they act, but Leonora acts more decidedly than she talks.

Believe me, dear madam,
With much respect,
Your grace's
Sincerely affectionate
HELEN C——.

LETTER LXXXV.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

I THANK you, my excellent friend, for the kindness of your last letter,* which came to me at the time I wanted it most. In the whole course of my life I never felt so much self-reproach as I have done since I heard of the illness of Leonora and the loss of my son. From this blow my mind will not easily recover. Of all torments self-reproach is the worst. And even now I cannot

* This letter does not appear.

follow the dictates of my own heart and of my better judgment.

In Olivia's company I am compelled to repress my feelings; she cannot sympathize in them; they offend her: she is dissatisfied even with my silence, and complains of my being out of spirits. Out of spirits!—How can I be otherwise at present? Has Olivia no touch of pity for a woman who was once her friend, who always treated her with generous kindness? But perhaps I am a little unreasonable, and expect too much from female nature.

At all events, I wish that Olivia would spare me at this moment her sentimental metaphysics. She is for ever attempting to prove to me that I cannot love so well as she can. I admit that I cannot talk of love so finely. I hope all this will not go on when we arrive at Petersburg.

The ministry at last know their own minds. I saw —— to-day, and every thing will be quickly arranged; therefore, my dear friend, do not delay coming to town, to

Your obliged
F. L——.

LETTER LXXXVI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Perhaps you are a *little* unreasonable! Indeed, my dear friend, I do not think you a *little* unreasonable, but very nearly stark mad. What! quarrel with your mistress because she is not sorry that your wife is ill, and because she cannot sympathize in your grief for the loss of your son! Where, except perhaps in absurd novels, did you ever meet with these paragons of mistresses, who were so magnanimous and so generous as to sacrifice their own reputations, and then be satisfied to share the only possible good remaining to them in life, the heart of their lover, with a rival more estimable, more amiable than themselves, and who has the advantage of being a wife? This sharing of hearts, this union of souls with this opposition of interests—this metaphysical gallantry is absolute nonsense, and all who try it in real life will find it so to their cost. Why should you, my dear L——, expect such superlative excellence

from your Olivia? Do you think that a woman by losing one virtue increases the strength of those that remain, as it is said that the loss of one of our senses renders all the others more acute? Do you think that a lady, by yielding to love, and by proving that she has not sufficient resolution or forbearance to preserve the honour of her sex, gives the best possible demonstration of her having sufficient strength of character to rise superior to all the other weaknesses incident to human, and more especially to female nature—envy and jealousy for instance?

No, no, my good friend, you have common sense, though you lately have been sparing of it in action. You had a wife, and a good wife, and you had some chance of being happy; but with a wife and a mistress, granting them to be both the best of their kind, the probabilities are rather against you. I speak only as a man of the world: morality, you know, is now merely an affair of calculation. According to the most approved tables of happiness, you have made a bad bargain. But be just, at any rate, and do not blame your Olivia for the inconveniences and evils inseparable from the species of connexion that you have been pleased to form. Do you expect the whole course of society and the nature of the human heart to change for your special accommodation? Do you believe in truth by wholesale, and yet in detail expect a happy exception in your own favour?—Seriously, my dear friend, you must either break off this connexion or bear it. I shall see you in a few days.

Yours truly,
J. B.

LETTER LXXXVII

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——

L—— Castle.

Leonora has recovered her strength surprisingly. She was so determined to be well, that her body dared not contradict her mind. Her excellent mother has been of the greatest possible service to us, for she has had sufficient influence to prevent her daughter from exerting herself too much. Her grace had a letter from Mr.

L—— to-day—very short, but very kind—at least all that I heard read of it. He has set my heart somewhat more at ease by the comfortable assurance, that he will not leave England without seeing Lady Leonora. I have the greatest hopes from this interview! I have not felt so happy for many months—but I will not be too sanguine. Mr. L—— talks of being here the latter end of this month. The duchess, with her usual prudence, intends to leave her daughter before that time, lest Mr. L——should be constrained by her presence, or should imagine that Leonora acts from any impulse but that of her own heart. I also, though much against my inclinations, shall decamp; for he might perhaps consider me as an adviser, caballer, confidante, or at least a troublesome spectator. All reconciliation scenes should be without spectators. Men do not like to be seen on their knees: they are at a loss, like Sir Walter Raleigh in "The Critic;" they cannot get off gracefully. I am, dear Margaret

Yours affectionately,
HELEN C——.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Friday.

MY DEAR L——,

ASK yourself, in the name of common sense, why you should go to Petersburg with this sentimental coquette, this romantic termagant, of whom I see you are already more than half-tired. As to your being bound to her in honour, I cannot see how. Why should you make honour, justice, humanity, and gratitude plead so finely all on one side, and that the wrong side of the question? Have none of these one word to whisper in favour of anybody in this world but of a worthless mistress, who makes you miserable? I think you have learned from your heroine to be so expert in sentimental logic, that you can change virtues into vices, and vices into virtues, till at last you do not know them asunder. Else why should you make it a point of conscience to abandon your wife—just at the moment, too, when you are thoroughly convinced of her love for you, when you

are touched to the soul by her generous conduct, and when your heart longs to return to her?

Please to remember that this Lady Olivia's reputation was not unimpeached before her acquaintance with you, and do not take more glory or more blame to yourself than properly falls to your share. Do not forget that *poor* R*** was your predecessor, and do not let this delicate lady rest all the weight of her shame upon you, as certain Chinese culprits rest their portable pillories on the shoulders of their friends.

In two days I shall follow this letter, and repeat in person all the interrogatories I have just put to you, my dear friend. Prepare yourself to answer me sincerely such questions as I shall ask.

Yours truly,
J. B.

LETTER LXXXIX.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Monday, 12 o'clock.

For a few days did you say? To *bid adieu?* Oh! if once more you return to that fatal castle, that enchanted home, Olivia for ever loses all power over your heart. Bid her die, stab her to the heart, and she will call it mercy, and she will bless you with her dying lips; but talk not of leaving your Olivia! On her knees she writes this, her face all bathed in tears. And must she in her turn implore and supplicate? Must she abase herself even to the dust? Yes—love like hers vanquishes even the stubborn potency of female pride.

Your too fond
Olivia.

LETTER XC.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

[Dated a few hours after the preceding.]

Monday, half-past three.

Oh! this equivocating answer to my fond heart! Passion makes and admits of no compromise. Be mine, and wholly mine—or never, never will I survive your desertion! I can be happy only while I love; I can love only while I am beloved with fervency equal to my own; and when I cease to love, I cease to exist! No coward fears restrain my soul. The word suicide shocks not my ear, appals not my understanding. Death I consider but as the eternal rest of the wretched—the sweet, the sole refuge of despair.

Your resolute
Olivia

LETTER XCI.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Tuesday.

Return! return! on the wings of love return to the calm, the prudent, the happy, the transcendently happy Leonora! Return—but not to bid her adieu—return to be hers for ever, and only hers. I give you back your faith—I *give* you back your promises—you have *taken* back your heart.

But if you should desire once more to see Olivia, if you should have any lingering wish to bid her a last adieu, it must be this evening. To-morrow's sun rises not for Olivia. For her but a few short hours remain. Love, let them be all thy own! Intoxicate thy victim, mingle pleasure in the cup of death, and bid her fearless quaff it to the dregs!

LETTER XCII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——

Thursday.

My dear Friend,

You have by argument and raillery, and by every means that kindness and goodness could devise, endeavoured to expel from my mind a passion which you justly foresaw would be destructive of my happiness, and of the peace of a most estimable and amiable woman. With all the skill that a thorough knowledge of human nature in general, and of my peculiar character and foibles, could bestow, you have employed those

> ——"Words and spells which can control,
> Between the fits, the fever of the soul."

Circumstances have operated in conjunction with your skill to "medicine me to repose." The fits have gradually become weaker and weaker, the fever is now gone, but I am still to suffer for the extravagances committed during its delirium. I have entered into engagements which must be fulfilled; I have involved myself in difficulties from which I see no method of extricating myself honourably. Notwithstanding all the latitude which the system of modern gallantry allows to the conscience of our sex, and in spite of the convenient maxim which maintains that all arts are allowable in love and war, I think that a man cannot break a promise, whether made in words or by tacit implication, on the faith of which a woman sacrifices her reputation and happiness. Lady Olivia has thrown herself upon my protection. I am as sensible as you can be, my dear general, that scandal had attacked her reputation before our acquaintance commenced; but though the world had suspicions, they had no proofs; now there can be no longer any defence made for her character, there is no possibility of her returning to that rank in society to which she was entitled by her birth, and which she adorned with all the brilliant charms of wit and beauty; no happiness, no chance of happiness remains for her but from my constancy. Of naturally violent passions, unused to the

control of authority, habit, reason, or religion, and at this time impelled by love and jealousy, Olivia is on the brink of despair. I am not apt to believe that women die in modern times for love, nor am I easily disposed to think that I could inspire a dangerous degree of enthusiasm; yet I am persuaded that Olivia's passion, compounded as it is of various sentiments besides love, has taken such possession of her imagination, and is, as she fancies, so necessary to her existence, that if I were to abandon her, she would destroy that life which she has already attempted, I thank God! ineffectually. What a spectacle is a woman in a paroxysm of rage!—a woman we love, or whom we have loved!

Excuse me, my dear friend, if I wrote incoherently, for I have been interrupted many times since I began this letter. I am this day overwhelmed by a multiplicity of affairs, which, in consequence of Olivia's urgency to leave England immediately, must be settled with an expedition for which my head is not at present well qualified. I do not feel well: I can command my attention but on one subject, and on that all my thoughts are to no purpose. Whichever way I now act, I must endure and inflict misery. I must either part from a wife who has given me the most tender, the most touching proofs of affection—a wife who is all that a man can esteem, admire, and love; or I must abandon a mistress who loves me with all the desperation of passion to which she would fall a sacrifice. But why do I talk as if I were still at liberty to make a choice?—My head is certainly very confused. I forgot that I am bound by a solemn promise, and this is the evil which distracts me. I will give you, if I can, a clear narrative.

Last night I had a terrible scene with Olivia. I foresaw that she would be alarmed by my intended visit to L—— Castle, even though it was but to take leave of my Leonora. I abstained from seeing Olivia to avoid altercation, and with all the delicacy in my power I wrote to her, assuring her that my resolution was fixed. Note after note came from her, with pathetic and passionate appeals to my heart; but I was still resolute. At length, the day before that on which I was to set out for L—— Castle, she wrote to warn me, that if I wished to take a last farewell, I must see her that evening:

her note concluded with, "To-morrow's sun will not rise for Olivia." This threat, and many strange hints of her opinions concerning suicide, I at the time disregarded, as only thrown out to intimidate a lover. However, knowing the violence of Olivia's temper, I was punctual to the appointed hour, fully determined by my firmness to convince her that these female wiles were vain.

My dear friend, I would not advise the wisest man and the most courageous upon earth to brave such dangers, confident in his strength. Even a victory may cost him too dear.

I found Olivia reclining on a sofa, her beautiful tresses unbound, her dress the perfection of elegant negligence. I half-suspected that it was studied negligence: yet I could not help pausing, as I entered, to contemplate a figure. She never looked more beautiful—more fascinating. Holding out her hand to me, she said, with her languid smile and tender expression of voice and manner, "You *are* come then to bid me farewell. I doubted whether . . . . . But I will not upbraid—mine be all the pain of this last adieu. During the few minutes we have to pass together,

'Between us two let there be peace.'"

I sat down beside her, rather agitated, I confess, but commanding myself so that my emotion could not be visible. In a composed tone I asked, why she spoke of a last adieu; and observed that we should meet again in a few days.

"Never!" replied Olivia. "Weak woman as I am, love inspires me with sufficient force to make and to keep this resolution."

As she spoke, she took from her bosom a rose, and presenting it to me in a solemn manner, "Put this rose into water to-night," continued she; "to-morrow it will be alive!"

Her look, her expressive eyes, seemed to say, This flower will be alive, but Olivia will be dead. I am ashamed to confess that I was silent, because I could not just then speak.

"I have used some precaution," resumed Olivia, "to spare you, my dearest L——, unnecessary pain.—Look around you."

The room, I now for the first time observed, was ornamented with flowers.

"This apartment, I hope," continued she, "has not the air of the chamber of death. I have endeavoured to give it a festive appearance, that the remembrance of your last interview with your once loved Olivia may be at least unmixed with horror."

At this instant, my dear general, a confused recollection of Rousseau's Heloise, the dying scene, and her room ornamented with flowers, came into my imagination, and destroying the idea of reality, changed suddenly the whole course of my feelings.

In a tone of raillery I represented to Olivia her resemblance to Julie, and observed that it was a pity she had not a lover whose temper was more similar than mine to that of the divine St. Preux. Stung to the heart by my ill-timed raillery, Olivia started up from the sofa, broke from my arms with sudden force, snatched from the table a penknife, and plunged it into her side.

She was about to repeat the blow, but I caught her arm—she struggled—"Promise me, then," cried she, "that you will never more see my hated rival."

"I cannot make such a promise, Olivia," said I, holding her uplifted arm forcibly. "I will not."

The words "hated rival," which showed me that Olivia was actuated more by the spirit of hatred than love, made me reply in as decided a tone as even you could have spoken, my dear general. But I was shocked, and reproached myself with cruelty, when I saw the blood flow from her side; she was terrified. I took the knife from her powerless hand, and she fainted in my arms. I had sufficient presence of mind to reflect that what had happened should be kept as secret as possible; therefore, without summoning Josephine, whose attachment to her mistress I have reason to suspect, I threw open the windows, gave Olivia air and water, and her senses returned: then I despatched my Swiss for a surgeon. I need not speak of my own feelings—no suspense could be more dreadful than that which I endured between the sending for the surgeon and the moment when he gave his opinion. He relieved me at once, by pronouncing it to be a slight flesh wound, that would be of no manner of consequence. Olivia, however, whether from alarm or pain, or from the sight of the blood, fainted three times during the dressing of her side; and though the surgeon assured her that it would be perfectly well in a few days, she was evidently apprehensive that we concealed from her the

real danger. At the idea of the approach of death, which now took possession of her imagination, all courage forsook her, and for some time my efforts to support her spirits were ineffectual. She could not dispense with the services of Josephine: and from the moment this French woman entered the room, there was nothing to be heard but exclamations the most violent and noisy. As to assistance she could give none. At last her exaggerated demonstrations of horror and grief ended with,—"Dieu merci! au moins nous voilà delivrés de ce voyage affreux. Apparemment qu'il ne sera plus question de ce vilain Petersburg pour madame."

A new train of thoughts was roused by these words in Olivia's mind; and looking at me, she eagerly inquired why the journey to Petersburg was to be given up, if she was in no danger? I assured her that Josephine spoke at random, that my intentions with regard to the embassy to Russia were unaltered.

"Seulement retardé un peu," said Josephine, who was intent only upon her own selfish object. "Sûrement, madame ne voyagera pas dans cet etat!"

Olivia started up, and looking at me with terrific wildness in her eyes, "Swear to me," said she, "swear that you will not deceive me, or I will this instant tear open this wound, and never more suffer it to be closed."

"Deceive you, Olivia!" cried I, "what deceit can you fear from me? What is it you require of me?"

"I require from you a promise, a solemn promise, that you will go with *me* to Russia!"

"I solemnly promise that I will," said I: "now be tranquil, Olivia, I beseech you."

The surgeon represented the necessity of keeping herself quiet, and declared that he would not answer for the cure of his patient on any other terms. Satisfied by the solemnity of my promise, Olivia now suffered me to depart. This morning she sends me word that in a few days she shall be ready to leave England. Can you meet me, my dear friend, at L—— Castle? I go down there to-day, to bid adieu to Leonora. From thence I shall proceed to Yarmouth, and embark immediately. Olivia will follow me.

Your obliged
F. L——.

LETTER XCIII

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

L—— Castle.

DEAREST MOTHER,

MY husband is here! at home with me, with your happy Leonora—and his heart is with her. His looks, his voice, his manner tell me so, and by them I never was deceived. No, he is incapable of deceit. Whatever have been his errors, he never stooped to dissimulation. He is again my own, still capable of loving me, still worthy of all my affection. I knew that the delusion could not last long, or rather you told me so, my best friend, and I believed you; you did him justice. He was indeed deceived—who might not have been deceived by Olivia? His passions were under the power of an enchantress; but now he has triumphed over her arts. He sees her such as she is, and her influence ceases.

I am not absolutely certain of all this; but I believe, because I hope it: yet he is evidently embarrassed, and seems unhappy: what can be the meaning of this? Perhaps he does not yet know his Leonora sufficiently to be secure of her forgiveness. How I long to set his heart at ease, and to say to him, let the past be forgotten for ever! How easy it is to the happy to forgive! There have been moments when I could not, I fear, have been just, when I am sure that I could not have been generous. I shall immediately offer to accompany Mr. L—— to Russia; I can have no further hesitation, for I see that he wishes it; indeed, just now he almost said so. His baggage is already embarked at Yarmouth—he sails in a few days, and in a few hours your daughter's fate, your daughter's happiness will be decided. It is decided, for I am sure he loves me; I see, I hear, I feel it. Dearest mother, I write to you in the first moment of joy. I hear his foot upon the stairs. Your happy

LEONORA L——.

LETTER XCIV.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

L—— Castle.

My dear Mother,

My hopes are all vain. Your prophecies will never be accomplished. We have both been mistaken in Mr. L——'s character, and henceforward your daughter must not depend upon him for any portion of her happiness. I once thought it impossible that my love for him could be diminished: he has changed my opinion. Mine is not that species of weak or abject affection which can exist under the sense of ill-treatment and injustice, much less can my love survive esteem for its object.

I told you, my dear mother, and I believed, that his affections had returned to me; but I was mistaken. He has not sufficient strength or generosity of soul to love me, or to do justice to my love. I offered to go with him to Russia: he answered, "That is impossible." —Impossible!—Is it then impossible for him to do that which is just or honourable? or, seeing what is right, must he follow what is wrong? or can his heart never more be touched by virtuous affections? Is his taste so changed, so depraved, that he can now be pleased and charmed only by what is despicable and profligate in our sex? Then I should rejoice that we are to be separated—separated for ever. May years and years pass away and wear out, if possible, the memory of all he has been to me! I think I could better, much better bear the total loss, the death of him I have loved, than endure to feel that he had survived both my affection and esteem; to see the person the same, but the soul changed; to feel every day, every hour, that I must despise what I have so admired and loved.

Mr. L—— is gone from hence. He leaves England the day after to-morrow. Lady Olivia is to *follow* him. I am glad that public decency is not to be outraged by their embarking together. My dearest mother, be assured that at this moment your daughter's feelings are worthy of you. Indignation and the pride of virtue support her spirit.

Leonora L——

LETTER XCV.

GENERAL B—— TO LADY LEONORA L——.

Yarmouth.

HAD I not the highest confidence in Lady Leonora L——'s fortitude, I should not venture to write to her at this moment, knowing as I do that she is but just recovered from a dangerous illness.

Mr. L—— had requested me to meet him at L—— Castle previous to his leaving England, but it was out of my power. I met him, however, on the road to Yarmouth, and as we travelled together I had full opportunity of seeing the state of his mind. Permit me —the urgency of the case requires it—to speak without reserve, with the freedom of an old friend. I imagine that your ladyship parted from Mr. L—— with feelings of indignation, at which I cannot be surprised: but if you had seen him as I saw him, indignation would have given way to pity. Loving you, madam, as you deserve to be loved, most ardently, most tenderly; touched to his inmost soul by the proofs of affection he had seen in your letters, in your whole conduct, even to the last moment of parting; my unhappy friend felt himself bound to resist the temptation of staying with you, or of accepting your generous offer to accompany him to Petersburg. He thought himself bound in honour by a promise extorted from him to save from suicide one whom he thinks he has injured, one who has thrown herself upon his protection. Of the conflict in his mind at parting with your ladyship I can judge from what he suffered afterward. I met Mr. L—— with feelings of extreme indignation, but before I had been an hour in his company, I never pitied any man so much in my life, for I never yet saw any one so truly wretched, and so thoroughly convinced that he deserved to be so. You know that he is not one who often gives way to his emotions, not one who expresses them much in words—but he could not command his feelings.

The struggle was too violent. I have no doubt that it was the real cause of his present illness. As the moment approached when he was to leave England,

he became more and more agitated. Towards evening he sank into a sort of apathy and gloomy silence, from which he suddenly broke into delirious raving. At twelve o'clock last night, the night he was to have sailed, he was seized with a violent and infectious fever. As to the degree of immediate danger, the physicians here cannot yet pronounce. I have sent to town for Dr. *****. Your ladyship may be certain that I shall not quit my friend, and that he shall have every possible assistance and attendance.

I am, with the truest esteem,
Your ladyship's faithful servant,
J. B.

LETTER XCVI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

L—— Castle.

DEAR MOTHER,

THIS moment an express from General B——. Mr L—— is dangerously ill at Yarmouth—a fever brought on by the agitation of his mind. How unjust I have been! Forget all I said in my last. I write in the utmost haste—just setting out for Yarmouth. I hope to be there to-morrow.

Your affectionate
LEONORA L——.

I open this to enclose the general's letter, which will explain every thing.

LETTER XCVII.

GENERAL B—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

Yarmouth.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR grace, I find, is apprized of Lady Leonora L——'s journey hither: I fear that you rely upon my prudence for preventing her exposing herself to the danger of catching this dreadful fever. But that has been beyond my power. Her ladyship arrived late last night. I had foreseen the probability of her coming, but not the

possibility of her coming so soon. I had taken no precautions, and she was in the house and upon the stairs in an instant. No entreaties, no arguments could stop her; I assured her that Mr. L——'s fever was pronounced by all the physicians to be of the most infectious kind. Dr. ***** joined me in representing that she would expose her life to almost certain danger if she persisted in her determination to see her husband; but she pressed forward, regardless of all that could be said. To the physicians she made no answer; to me she replied, "You are Mr. L——'s friend, but I am his wife: you have not feared to hazard your life for him, and do you think I can hesitate?" I urged that there was no necessity for more than one person's running this hazard; and that, since it had fallen to my lot to be with my friend when he was first taken ill— She interrupted me,—"Is not this taking a cruel advantage of me, general? You know that I, too, would have been with Mr. L—— if—if it had been possible." Her manner, her pathetic emphasis, and the force of her implied meaning struck me so much that I was silent, and suffered her to pass on; but again the idea of her danger rushing upon my mind, I sprang before her to the door of Mr. L——'s apartment, and opposed her entrance. "Then, general," said she calmly, "perhaps you mistake me—perhaps you have heard repeated some unguarded words of mine in the moment of indignation..... unjust .... you best know how unjust indignation!—and you infer from these that my affection for my husband is extinguished. I deserve this—but do not punish me too severely."

I still kept my hand upon the lock of the door, expostulating with Lady Leonora in your grace's name, and in Mr. L——'s, assuring her that if he were conscious of what was passing, and able to speak, he would order me to prevent her seeing him in his present situation.

"And you, too, general!" said she, bursting into tears: "I thought you were my friend—would you prevent me from seeing him? And is not he conscious of what is passing? And is not he able to speak? Sir, I must be admitted! You have done your duty—now let me do mine. Consider, my right is superior to yours. No power on earth should or can prevent a wife from seeing her husband when he is..... Dear, dear general!" said she, clasping her raised hands and

falling suddenly at my feet, "let me see him but for one minute, and I will be grateful to you for ever!"

I could resist no longer—I tremble for the consequences. I know your grace sufficiently to be aware that you ought to be told the whole truth. I have but little hopes of my poor friend's life.

With much respect,

Your grace's faithful servant,

J. B.

LETTER XCVIII.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

A MIST hung over my eyes, and "my ears with hollow murmurs rung," when the dreadful tidings of your alarming illness were announced by your cruel messenger. My dearest L——! why does inexorable destiny doom me to be absent from you at such a crisis? Oh! this fatal wound of mine! It would, I fear, certainly open again if I were to travel. So this corporeal being must be imprisoned here, while my anxious soul, my viewless spirit, hovers near you, longing to minister each tender consolation, each nameless comfort that love alone can, with fond prescience and magic speed, summon round the couch of pain.

"O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly to you!" Why must I resign the sweetly-painful task of soothing you in the hour of sickness? And shall others, with officious zeal,

"Guess the faint wish, explain the asking eye?"

Alas! it must be so—even were I to fly to him, my sensibility could not support the scene. To behold him stretched on the bed of disease—perhaps of death—would be agony past endurance. Let firmer nerves than Olivia's, and hearts more callous, assume the offices from which they shrink not. 'Tis the fate, the hard fate of all endued with exquisite sensibility, to be palsied by the excess of their feelings, and to become imbecile at the moment their exertions are most necessary.

Your too tenderly sympathizing

OLIVIA.

LETTER XCIX.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

My husband is alive, and that is all. Never did I see, nor could I have conceived, such a change, and in so short a time! When I opened the door, his eyes turned upon me with unmeaning eagerness: he did not know me. The good general thought my voice might have some effect. I spoke, but could obtain no answer, no sign of intelligence. In vain I called upon him by every name that used to reach his heart. I knelt beside him, and took one of his burning hands in mine. I kissed it, and suddenly he started up, exclaiming, "Olivia! Olivia!" with dreadful vehemence. In his delirium he raved about Olivia's stabbing herself, and called upon us to hold her arm, looking wildly towards the foot of the bed, as if the figure were actually before him. Then he sank back, as if quite exhausted, and gave a deep sigh. Some of my tears fell upon his hand; he felt them before I perceived that they had fallen, and looked so earnestly in my face that I was in hopes his recollection was returning; but he only said, "Olivia, I believe that you love me;" then sighed more deeply than before, drew his hand away from me, and, as well as I could distinguish, said something about Leonora.

But why should I give you the pain of hearing all these circumstances, my dear mother? It is enough to say that he passed a dreadful night. This morning the physicians say, that if he passes this night—if—my dear mother, what a terrible suspense!

Leonora L——

LETTER C.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

Morning is at last come, and my husband is still alive: so there is yet hope. When I said I thought I could bear to survive him, how little I knew of myself, and

how little, how very little I expected to be so soon tried! All evils are remediable but one, that one which I dare not name.

The physicians assure me that he is better. His friend, to whose judgment I trust more, thinks as they do. I know not what to believe. I dread to flatter myself and to be disappointed. I will write again, dearest mother, to-morrow.

Your ever affectionate

LEONORA L——.

LETTER CI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Wednesday.

No material change since yesterday, my dear mother. This morning, as I was searching for some medicine, I saw on the chimney-piece a note from Lady Olivia ——. It might have been there yesterday, and ever since my arrival, but I did not see it. At any other time it would have excited my indignation, but my mind is now too much weakened by sorrow. My fears for my husband's life absorb all other feelings.

LETTER CII

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

WORDS cannot express what I have suffered since I wrote last! Oh! why do I not hear that the danger is over!—Long since would I have been with you, all that my soul holds dear, could I have escaped from these tyrants, these medical despots, who detain me by absolute force, and watch over me with unrelenting vigilance. I have consulted Dr. ***, who assures me that my fears of my wound opening, were I to take so long a journey, are too well-founded; that in the present feverish state of my mind he would not answer for the consequences. I heed him not—life I value not.—Most joyfully would I sacrifice myself for the man I love. But even could I escape from my persecutors, too well

I know that to see you would be a vain attempt—too well I know that I should not be admitted. Your love, your fears for Olivia would barbarously banish her and forbid her your dear, your dangerous atmosphere. Too justly would you urge that my rashness might prove our mutual ruin—that in the moment of crisis or of convalescence, anxiety for me might defeat the kind purpose of nature. And even were I secure of your recovery, the delay, I speak not of the danger of my catching the disease, would, circumstanced as we are, be death to our hopes. We should be compelled to part. The winds would waft you from me. The waves would bear you to another region, far—oh, far from your

OLIVIA.

LETTER CIII.

GENERAL B—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

Yarmouth, Thursday.

MY DEAR MADAM,

MR. L—— has had a relapse, and is now more alarmingly ill than I have yet seen him: he does not know his situation, for his delirium has returned. The physicians give him over. Dr. H. says that we must prepare for the worst.

I have but one word of comfort for your grace—that your admirable daughter's health has not yet suffered.

Your grace's faithful servant,

J. B.

LETTER CIV.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

THE delirium has subsided. A few minutes ago, as I was kneeling beside him, offering up an almost hopeless prayer for his recovery, his eyes opened, and I perceived that he knew me. He closed his eyes again without speaking, opened them once more, and then looking at

me fixedly, exclaimed: "It is not a dream! ou are Leonora!—*my* Leonora!"

What exquisite pleasure I felt at the sound of these words, at the tone in which they were pronounced! My husband folded me in his arms; and, till I felt his burning lips, I forgot that he was ill.

When he came thoroughly to his recollection, and when the idea that his fever might be infectious occurred to him, he endeavoured to prevail upon me to leave the room. But what danger can there be for me *now?* My whole soul, my whole frame is inspired with new life. If he recover, your daughter may still be happy.

LETTER CV.

GENERAL B—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

My dear Madam,

A few hours ago my friend became perfectly sensible of his danger, and calling me to his bedside, told me that he was eager to make use of the little time which he might have to live. He was quite calm and collected. He employed me to write his last wishes and bequests; and I must do him the justice to declare, that the strongest idea and feeling in his mind evidently was the desire to show his entire confidence in his wife, and to give her, in his last moments, proofs of his esteem and affection. When he had settled his affairs, he begged to be left alone for some time. Between twelve and one his bell rang, and he desired to see Lady Leonora and me. He spoke to me with that warmth of friendship which he has ever felt from our childhood. Then turning to his wife, his voice utterly failed, and he could only press to his lips that hand which was held out to him in speechless agony.

"Excellent woman!" he articulated at last; then collecting his mind, he exclaimed, "My beloved Leonora, I will not die without expressing my feelings for you; I know yours for me. I do not ask for that forgiveness which your generous heart granted long before I deserved it. Your affection for me has been shown by actions, at the hazard of your life; I can only thank you with weak words. You possess my whole heart, my esteem, my admiration, my gratitude."

Lady Leonora, at the word *gratitude*, made an effort to speak, and laid her hand upon her husband's lips. He added, in a more enthusiastic tone, "You have my undivided love. Believe in the truth of these words—perhaps they are the last I may ever speak."

My friend sank back exhausted, and I carried Lady Leonora out of the room.

I returned half an hour ago, and found every thing silent: Mr. L—— is lying with his eyes closed—quite still—I hope asleep. This may be a favourable crisis. I cannot delay this letter longer.

Your grace's faithful servant,
J. B.

LETTER CVI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

DEAREST MOTHER,

HE has slept several hours. Dr. H——, the most skilful of all his physicians, says that we may now expect his recovery. Adieu. The good general will add a line, to assure you that I am not deceived, nor too sanguine.

Yours most affectionately,
LEONORA L——.

Postscript by General B——.

I have some hopes—that is all I can venture to say to your grace.

LETTER CVII.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

DEAREST MOTHER,

EXCELLENT news for you to-day!—Mr. L—— is pronounced out of danger. He seems excessively touched by my coming here, and so grateful for the little kindness I have been able to show him during his illness! But, alas! that fatal promise! the recollection of it comes across my mind like a spectre. Mr. L—— has

never touched upon this subject,—I do all in my power to divert his thoughts to indifferent objects.

This morning, when I went into his room, I found him tearing to pieces that note which I mentioned to you a few days ago. He seemed much agitated, and desired to see General B——. They are now together, and were talking so loud in the next room to me, that I was obliged to retire, lest I should overhear secrets. Mr. L—— this moment sends for me. If I should not have time to add more, this short letter will satisfy you for to-day.

LEONORA L——.

I open my letter to say that I am not so happy as I was when I began it. I have heard all the circumstances relative to this terrible affair. Mr. L—— will go to Russia. I am as far from happiness as ever.

LETTER CVIII.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

"Say, is not absence death to those that love?"

How just, how beautiful a sentiment! yet cold and callous is that heart which knows not that there is a pang more dreadful than absence—far as the death of lingering torture exceeds, in corporeal sufferance, the soft slumber of expiring nature. Suspense! suspense! compared with thy racking agony, even absence is but the blessed euthanasia of love.

My dearest L——, why this torturing silence? one line, one word, I beseech you, from *your own hand;* say but *I live, and love you, my Olivia.* Hour after hour, and day after day, have I waited and waited, and hoped, and feared to hear from you. O, this intolerable agonizing suspense! Yet hope clings to my fond heart—hope! sweet treacherous hope!

"Non so si la Speranza
Va con l'inganno unita;
So che mantiene in vita
Qualche infelici almen."

OLIVIA.

LETTER CIX.

MR. L—— TO OLIVIA.

Yarmouth,

My dear Olivia,

This is the first line I have written since my illness. I could not sooner relieve you from suspense, for during most of this time I have been delirious, and never till now able to write. My physicians have this morning pronounced me out of danger; and as soon as my strength is sufficient to bear the voyage, I shall sail, according to my promise.

Your prudence, or that of your physician, has saved me much anxiety—perhaps saved my life: for had you been so rash as to come hither, besides my fears for your safety, I should have been exposed, in the moment of my returning reason, to a conflict of passions which I could not have borne.

Leonora is with me; she arrived the night after I was taken ill, and forced her way to me, when my fever was at the highest, and while I was in a state of delirium.

Lady Leonora will stay with me till the moment I sail, which I expect to do in about ten days. I cannot say positively, for I am still very weak, and may not be able to keep my word to a day. Adieu. I hope your mind will now be at ease. I am glad to hear from the surgeon that your wound is quite closed. I will write again, and more fully, when I am better able. Believe me, Olivia, I am most anxious to secure your happiness: allow me to believe that this will be in the power of

Yours sincerely,

F. L——.

LETTER CX.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

Barbarous man! with what cold cruelty you plunge a dagger into my heart! Leonora is with you!—Leonora! Then I am undone. Yes, she will—she has resumed all her power, her rights, her habitual empire

over your heart. Wretched Olivia!—But you say it is your wish to secure my happiness, you bid me allow you to believe it is in your power. What phrases!—You will sail, *according to your promise*.—Then nothing but your honour binds you to Olivia. And even now, at this guilty instant, in your secret soul, you wish, you expect from my offended pride, from my disgusted delicacy, a renunciation of this promise, a release from all the ties that bind you to me. You are right: this is what I ought to do; what I would do, if love had not so weakened my soul, so prostrated my spirit, rendered me so abject a creature, that *I cannot* what *I would*.

I must love on—female pride and resentment call upon me in vain. I cannot hate you. Even by the feeble tie, which I see you long to break, I must hold, rather than let you go for ever. I will not renounce your promise. I claim it. I adjure you, by all which a man of honour holds most sacred, to quit England the moment your health will allow you to sail. No equivocating with your conscience!—I hold you to your word. Oh, my dearest L——! to feel myself reduced to use such language to you, to find myself clinging to that last resource of shipwrecked love, *a promise!* It is with unspeakable agony I feel all this; lower I cannot sink in misery. Raise me, if indeed you wish my happiness—raise me! it is yet in your power. Tell me that my too susceptible heart has mistaken phantoms for realities—tell me that your last was not colder than usual; yes, I am ready to be deceived. Tell me that it was only the languor of disease; assure me that my rival forced her way only to your presence—that she has not won her easy way back to your heart; assure me that you are impatient once more to see your own OLIVIA.

LETTER CXI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

CAN you believe or imagine that I am actually unwilling to say or to think that Mr. L—— is quite well? Yet this is the fact. Such is the inconsistency and weakness of our natures—of my nature, I should say.

But a short time ago I thought that no evil could be so great as his danger; now that danger is past, I dread to hear him say that he is perfectly recovered. The moment he is able, he goes to Russia; that is decided irrevocably. The promise has been claimed and repeated. A solemn promise cannot be broken for any human consideration. I should despise him if he broke it; but can I love him for keeping it? His mind is at this instant agitated as much as mine is—more it cannot. Yet I ought to be better able to part with him now than when we parted before, because I have now at least the consolation of knowing that he leaves me against his will—that his heart will not go from me. This time I cannot be deceived; I have had the most explicit assurances of his *undivided* love. And indeed I was never deceived. All the appearances of regret at parting with me were genuine. The general witnessed the consequent struggle in Mr. L——'s mind, and this fever followed.

I will endeavour to calm and content myself with the possession of his love, and with the assurance that he will return to me as soon as possible. As soon as possible!—but what a vague hope! He sails with the first fair wind. What a dreadful certainty! Perhaps to-morrow! Oh, my dearest mother, perhaps to-night!

LEONORA L——.

LETTER CXII.

GENERAL B—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

[redacted]armouth.

MY DEAR MADAM,

TO-DAY Mr. L——, finding himself sufficiently recovered, gave orders to all his suite to embark, and, the wind being fair, determined to go on board immediately. In the midst of the bustle of the preparations for his departure, Lady Leonora, exhausted by her former activity, and unable to take any part in what was passing, sat silent, pale, and motionless, opposite to a window which looked out upon the sea; the vessel in which her husband was to sail lay in sight, and her eyes were fixed upon the streamers, watching their motion in the wind.

Mr. L—— was in his own apartment writing letters. An express arrived; and among other letters for the English ambassador to Russia, there was a large packet directed to Lady Leonora L——. Upon opening it, the crimson colour flew into her face, and she exclaimed, "Olivia's letters!—Lady Olivia ——'s letters to Mad. de P——. Who could send these to me!"

"I give you joy with all my heart!" cried I; "no matter how they come—they come in the most fortunate moment possible. I would stake my life upon it they will unmask Olivia at once. Where is Mr. L——? He must read them this moment."

I was hurrying out of the room to call my friend, but Lady Leonora stopped my career, and checked the transport of my joy.

"You do not think, my dear general," said she, "that I would for any consideration do so dishonourable an action as to read these letters!"

"Only let Mr. L—— read them," interrupted I; "that is all I ask of your ladyship. Give them to me. For the soul of me I can see nothing dishonourable in this. Let Lady Olivia be judged by her own words. Your ladyship shall not be troubled with her trash; but give the letters to me, I beseech you."

"No, I cannot," said Lady Leonora, steadily. "It is a great temptation; but I ought not to yield." She deliberately folded them up in a blank cover, directed them to Lady Olivia, and sealed them; while I, half in admiration and half in anger, went on expostulating.

"Good God! This is being too generous. But, my dear Lady Leonora, why will you sacrifice yourself? This is misplaced delicacy! Show those letters, and I'll lay my life Mr. L—— never goes to Russia."

"My dear friend," said she, looking up with tears in her eyes, "do not tempt me beyond my power to resist. Say no more."

At this instant Mr. L—— came into the room; and I am ashamed to confess to your grace, I really was so little master of myself that I was upon the point of seizing Olivia's letters and putting them into his hands. "L——," said I, "here is your admirable wife absurdly, yes, I must say it, absurdly standing upon a point of honour with one who has none! That packet which she has before her—"

Lady Leonora imposed silence upon me by one of those looks which no man can resist.

"My dear Leonora, you are right," said Mr. L——; "and you are almost right, my dear general. I know what that packet contains; and without doing any thing dishonourable, I hold myself absolved from my promise; I shall not go to Russia, my dearest wife." He flew into her arms—and I left them. I question whether they either of them felt much more than I did.

For some minutes I was content with knowing that these things had really happened, that I had heard Mr. L—— say he was absolved from all promises, and that he would not go to Russia; but how did all this happen so suddenly?—How did he know the contents of Olivia's letters, and without doing any thing dishonourable? There are some people who cannot be perfectly happy till they know the *rationale* of their happiness. I am one of these. I did not feel "a sober certainty of waking bliss" till I read a letter which Mr. L—— received by the same express that brought Olivia's letters, and which he read while we were debating. I beg your grace's pardon if I am too minute in explanation; but I do as I would be done by. The letter was from one of the private secretaries, who is, I understand, a relation and friend of Lady Leonora L——. As the original goes this night to Lady Olivia, I send your grace a copy. You will give me credit for copying, and at such a time as this! I congratulate your grace, and

I have the honour to be, &c.,

J. B.

LETTER CXIII.

TO MR. L——

[Private.]

London, St. James's-street.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN the same moment you receive this, your lady, for whom I have the highest regard, will receive from me a valuable present, a packet of Lady Olivia ——'s letters to one of her French friends. These letters were lately

found in a French frigate, taken by one of our cruisers; and, as *intercepted correspondence* is the order of the day, these, with all the despatches on board, were transmitted to our office to be examined, in hopes of making reprisals of state secrets. Some letters about the court and Emperor of Russia led us to suppose that we should find some political manœuvres, and we examined further. The examination fortunately fell to my lot, as private secretary. After looking them all over, however, I found that these papers contained only family secrets. I obtained permission to send them to Lady Leonora L——, to ensure the triumph of virtue over vice—to put it into her ladyship's power completely to unmask her unworthy rival. These letters will show you by what arts you have been deceived. You will find yourself ridiculed as *a cold awkward Englishman;* one who will *hottentot again, whatever pains may be taken to civilize him; a man of ice*, to be taken as a lover from *pure charity*, or *pure curiosity*, or the pure *besoin d'aimer*. Here are many pure motives, of which you will, my dear sir, take your choice. You will further observe in one of her letters, that Lady Olivia premeditated the design of prevailing with you to carry her to Russia, that she might show her power *to that proudest of earthly prudes*, the Duchess of ***, and that she might *gratify her great revenge against Lady Leonora L——*.

Sincerely hoping, my dear sir, that these letters may open your eyes, and restore you and my amiable relation to domestic happiness, I make no apology for the liberty I take, and cannot regret the momentary pain I may inflict. You are at liberty to make what use you think proper of this letter.

I have it in command from my Lord —— to add, that if your health, or any other circumstances, should render this embassy to Russia less desirable to you than it appeared some time ago, other arrangements can be made, and another friend of government is ready to supply your place.

I am, my dear sir,
Yours, &c.

———.

To F. L——, Esq., &c.

LETTER CXIV.

FROM LADY LEONORA L—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

Yarmouth.

Joy, dearest mother! Come and share your daughter's happiness!

Continued by General B——.

* * * * * * *

Lady Olivia, thus unmasked by her own hand, has fled to the Continent, declaring that she will never more return to England. There she is right—England is not a country fit for such women. But I will never waste another word or thought upon her.

Mr. L—— has given up the Russian embassy, and returns with Lady Leonora to L—— Castle to-morrow. He has invited me to accompany them. Lady Leonora is now the happiest of wives, and your grace the happiest of mothers.

I have the honour and the pleasure to be
Your grace's sincerely attached
J. B.

LETTER CXV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO LADY LEONORA L——.

My beloved daughter, pride and delight of your happy mother's heart, I give you joy! Your temper, fortitude, and persevering affection have now their just reward. Enjoy your happiness, heightened as it must be by the sense of self-approbation, and the sympathy of all who know you. And now let me indulge the vanity of a mother; let me exult in the accomplishment of my prophecies; and let me be listened to with due humility when I prophesy again. With as much certainty as I foretold what is now present, I foresee, my child, your future destiny; and I predict that you will preserve while you live your husband's fondest affections. Your prudence will prevent you from indulging too far your

taste for retirement, or for the exclusive society of your intimate friends. Spend your winters in London: your rank, your fortune, and, I may be permitted to add, your character, manners, and abilities give you the power of drawing round you persons of the best information, and of the highest talents. Your husband will find in such society every thing that can attach him to his home; and in you, his most rational friend, and his most charming companion, who will excite him to every generous and noble exertion.

For the good and wise there is in love a power unknown to the ignorant and the vicious,—a power of communicating fresh energy to all the faculties of the soul, of exalting them to the highest state of perfection. The friendship which in later life succeeds to such love is perhaps the greatest, and certainly the most permanent blessing of life.

An admirable German writer—you see, my dear, that I have no prejudices against good German writers—an admirable German writer says, that "Love is like the morning shadows, which diminish as the day advances; but friendship is like the shadows of the evening, which increase even till the setting of the sun."

1805.

LETTER

FROM

A GENTLEMAN TO HIS FRIEND,

UPON THE

BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER;

WITH THE ANSWER.

LETTER

FROM

A GENTLEMAN TO HIS FRIEND,

&c.

I CONGRATULATE you, my dear sir, upon the birth of your daughter; and I wish that some of the fairies of ancient times were at hand to endow the damsel with health, wealth, wit, and beauty. Wit!—I should make a long pause before I accepted of this gift for a daughter—you would make none.

As I know it to be your opinion that it is in the power of education, more certainly than it was ever believed to be in the power of fairies, to bestow all mental gifts; and as I have heard you say that education should begin as early as possible, I am in haste to offer you my sentiments, lest my advice should come too late.

Your general ideas of the habits and virtues essential to the perfection of the female character nearly agree with mine; but we differ materially as to the cultivation which it is necessary or expedient to bestow upon the understandings of women. You are a champion for the rights of woman, and insist upon the equality of the sexes; but since the days of chivalry are past, and since modern gallantry permits men to speak, at least to one another, in less sublime language of the fair; I may confess to you that I see neither from experience nor analogy, much reason to believe that, in the human species alone, there are no marks of inferiority in the female:—curious and admirable exceptions there may be, but many such have not fallen within my observation. I cannot say that I have been much enraptured, either on a first view or on a closer inspection, with female prodi-

gies. Prodigies are scarcely less offensive to my taste than monsters: humanity makes us refrain from expressing disgust at the awkward shame of the one, while the intemperate vanity of the other justly provokes ridicule and indignation. I have always observed in the understandings of women who have been too much cultivated, some disproportion between the different faculties of their minds. One power of the mind undoubtedly may be cultivated at the expense of the rest; as we see that one muscle or limb may acquire excessive strength, and an unnatural size, at the expense of the health of the whole body: I cannot think this desirable either for the individual or for society. The unfortunate people in certain mountains of Switzerland are, some of them, proud of the excrescence by which they are deformed. I have seen women vain of exhibiting mental deformities, which to me appeared no less disgusting. In the course of my life it has never been my good fortune to meet with a female whose mind, in strength, just proportion, and activity, I could compare to that of a sensible man.

Allowing, however, that women are equal to our sex in natural abilities; from their situation in society, from their domestic duties, their taste for dissipation, their love of romance, poetry, and all the lighter parts of literature, their time must be so fully occupied, that they could never have leisure for, even supposing that they were capable of, that severe application to which our sex submit. Between persons of equal genius and equal industry, time becomes the only measure of their acquirements.—Now calculate the time which is wasted by the fair sex, and tell me how much the start of us they ought to have in the beginning of the race, if they are to reach the goal before us? It is not possible that women should ever be our equals in knowledge, unless you assert that they are far our superiors in natural capacity. Not only time but opportunity must be wanting to complete female studies: we mix with the world without restraint, we converse freely with all classes of people, with men of wit, of science, of learning, with the artist, the mechanic, the labourer; every scene of life is open to our view; every assistance that foreign or domestic ingenuity can invent, to encourage literary studies, is ours almost exclusively. From academies, colleges, public libraries, private associations of literary

men, women are excluded, if not by law, at least by custom, which cannot easily be conquered. Whenever women appear, even when we seem to admit them as our equals in understanding, every thing assumes a different form; our politeness, delicacy, habits towards the sex forbid us to argue or to converse with them as we do with one another: we see things as they are; but women must always see things through a veil, or cease to be women. With these insuperable difficulties in their education, and in their passage through life, it seems impossible that their minds should ever acquire that vigour and *efficiency* which accurate knowledge and various experience of life and manners can bestow.

Much attention has lately been paid to the education of the female sex; and you will say that we have been amply repaid for our care,—that ladies have lately exhibited such brilliant proofs of genius as must dazzle and confound their critics. I do not ask for proofs of genius. I ask for solid proofs of utility. In which of the useful arts, in which of the exact sciences, have we been assisted by female sagacity or penetration?—I should be glad to see a list of discoveries, of inventions, of observations, evincing patient research, of truths established upon actual experiment, or deduced by just reasoning from previous principles: if these, or any of these, can be presented by a female champion for her sex, I shall be the first to clear the way for her to the temple of Fame.

I must not speak of my contemporaries, else candour might oblige me to allow that there are some few instances of great talents applied to useful purposes: but, except these, what have been the literary productions of women? In poetry, plays, and romances, in the art of imposing upon the understanding by means of the imagination, they have excelled; but to useful literature they have scarcely turned their thoughts. I have never heard of any female proficients in science—few have pretended to science till within these few years.

You will tell me, that in the most difficult and most extensive science of politics women have succeeded; you will cite the names of some illustrious queens. I am inclined to think, with the Duke of Burgundy, that "queens who reigned well were governed by men, and kings who reigned ill were governed by women."

The isolated examples of a few heroines cannot convince me that it is safe or expedient to trust the sex with power: their power over themselves has regularly been found to diminish in proportion as their power over others has been increased. I should not refer you to the scandalous chronicles of modern times, to volumes of private anecdotes, or to the abominable secret histories of courts, where female influence and female depravity are synonymous terms; but I appeal to the open equitable page of history, to a body of evidence collected from the testimony of ages, for experiments tried upon the grandest scale of which nature admits, registered by various hands, without the possibility of collusion, and without a view to any particular system: from these you must be convinced that similar consequences have uniformly resulted from the same causes, in nations the most unlike, and at periods the most distant. Trace the history of female nature, from the court of Augustus to the court of Louis the Fourteenth, and tell me whether you can hesitate to acknowledge that the influence, the liberty, and the *power* of women have been constant concomitants of the moral and political decline of empires: I say the concomitants: where events are thus invariably connected, I might be justified in saying that they were *causes*—you would call them *effects*; but we need not dispute about the momentary precedence of evils, which are found to be inseparable companions: they may be alternately cause and effect,—the reality of the connexion is established; it may be difficult to ascertain precisely its nature.

You will assert that the fatal consequences which have resulted from our trusting the sex with liberty and power have been originally occasioned by the subjection and ignorance in which they had previously been held, and of our subsequent folly and imprudence, in *throwing the reins of dominion into hands unprepared and uneducated to guide them.* I am at a loss to conceive any system of education that can properly prepare women for the exercise of power. Cultivate their understandings, "cleanse the visual orb with euphrasy and rue," till they can with one comprehensive glance take in "one-half at least of round eternity;" still you have no security that their reason will govern their conduct. The moral character seems, even among men of superior strength of mind, to have no certain de-

pendence upon the reasoning faculty; habit, prejudice, taste, example, and the different strength of various passions, form the moral character. We are impelled to action frequently contrary to the belief of our sober reason; and we pursue what we could, in the hour of deliberation, demonstrate to be inconsistent with *that greatest possible share of happiness*, which it is the object of every rational creature to secure. We frequently "think with one species of enthusiasm, and act with another:" and can we expect from women more consistency of conduct, if they are allowed the same liberty?—No one can feel more strongly than you do the necessity and the value of female integrity; no one can more clearly perceive how much in society depends upon the honour of women; and how much it is the interest of every individual, as well as of every state, to guard their virtue, and to preserve inviolate the purity of their manners. Allow me, then, to warn you of the danger of talking in loud strains to the sex of the noble contempt of prejudice. You would look with horror at one who should go to sap the foundations of the building; beware then how you venture to tear away the ivy which clings to the walls, and braces the loose stones together.

I am by no means disposed to indulge in the fashionable ridicule of prejudice. There is a sentimental, metaphysical argument, which, independently of all others, has lately been used, to prevail upon us to relinquish that superiority which strength of body in savage, and strength of mind in civilized, nations secure to man. We are told, that as women are reasonable creatures, they should be governed only by reason; and that we *disgrace* ourselves, and *enslave* them, when we instil even the most useful truths and prejudices. Morality should, we are told, be founded upon demonstration, not upon sentiment; and we should not require human beings to submit to any laws or customs, without convincing their understandings of the universal utility of these political conventions. When are we to expect this conviction? We cannot expect it from childhood, scarcely from youth; but from the maturity of the understanding we are told that we may expect it with certainty. And of what use can it then be to us? When the habits are fixed, when the character is decided, when the manners are formed, what can be done by the bare conviction of

the understanding? What could we expect from that woman whose moral education was to begin at the moment when she was called upon to *act;* and who, without having imbibed in her early years any of the salutary prejudices of her sex, or without having been educated in the amiable acquiescence to well established maxims of female prudence, should boldly venture to conduct herself by the immediate conviction of her understanding? I care not for the names or titles of my guides; all that I shall inquire is, which is best acquainted with the road. Provided women be conducted quietly to their good, it is scarcely worth their while to dispute about the pompous metaphysical names or precedency of their motives. Why should they deem it disgraceful to be induced to pursue their interest by what some philosophers are pleased to call *weak* motives? Is it not much less disgraceful to be peaceably governed by weak reasons than to be incapable of being restrained by the strongest? The dignity of human nature, and the boasted free-will of rational agents, are high-sounding words, likely to impose upon the vanity of the fair sex, as well as upon the pride of ours; but if we analyze the ideas annexed to these terms, to what shall we reduce them? Reason in its highest perfection seems just to arrive at the certainty of instinct; and truth, impressed upon the mind in early youth by the united voice of affection and authority, gives all the real advantages of the most investigating spirit of philosophy. If the result of the thought, experience, and sufferings of one race of beings is (when inculcated upon the belief of the next) to be stigmatized as prejudice, there is an end to all the benefits of history and of education. The mutual intercourse of individuals and of nations must be only for the traffic or amusement of the day. Every age must repeat the same experiments; every man and every nation must make the same mistakes, and suffer the same miseries, while the civilization and happiness of the world, if not retrograde in their course, must for ever be stationary.

Let us not then despise, or teach the other sex to despise, the traditional maxims of experience, or those early prepossessions which may be termed prejudices, but which in reality serve as their moral instinct. I can see neither tyranny on our part, nor slavery on theirs, in this system of education. This sentimental or meta-

physical appeal to our candour and generosity has then no real force; and every other argument for the *literary* and *philosophical* education of women, and for the extraordinary cultivation of their understandings, I have examined.

You probably imagine that, by the superior ingenuity and care you may bestow on your daughter's education, you shall make her an exception to general maxims; you shall give her all the blessings of a literary cultivation, and at the same time preserve her from all the follies, and faults, and evils which have been found to attend the character of a literary lady.

Systems produce projects; and as projects in education are of all others the most hazardous, they should not be followed till after the most mature deliberation. Though it may be natural, is it wise for any man to expect extraordinary success, from his efforts or his precautions, beyond what has ever been the share of those who have had motives as strong for care and for exertion, and some of whom were possibly his equals in ability? Is it not incumbent upon you, as a parent and as a philosopher, to calculate accurately what you have to fear, as well as what you have to hope? You can at present, with a sober degree of interest, bear to hear me enumerate the evils, and ridicule the foibles, incident to literary ladies; but if your daughter were actually in this class, you would not think it friendly if I were to attack them. In this favourable moment, then, I beg you to hear me with temper; and as I touch upon every danger and every fault, consider cautiously whether you have a certain preventive or a specific remedy in store for each of them.

Women of literature are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago. They make a class in society, they fill the public eye, and have acquired a degree of consequence and an appropriate character. The esteem of private friends, and the admiration of the public for their talents, are circumstances highly flattering to their vanity; and as such I will allow them to be substantial pleasures. I am also ready to acknowledge that a taste for literature adds much to the happiness of life, and that women may enjoy to a certain degree this happiness as well as men. But with literary women this silent happiness seems at best but a subordinate consideration; it is not by the treasures they possess,

but by those which they have an opportunity of displaying, that they estimate their wealth. To obtain public applause, they are betrayed too often into a miserable ostentation of their learning. Coxe tells us, that certain Russian ladies split their pearls, in order to make a greater display of finery.

The pleasure of being admired for wit or erudition I cannot exactly measure in a female mind; but state it to be as delightful as you can imagine it to be, there are evils attendant upon it which, in the estimation of a prudent father, may overbalance the good. The intoxicating effect of wit upon the brain has been well remarked by a poet, who was a friend to the fair sex: and too many ridiculous, and too many disgusting examples confirm the truth of the observation. The deference that is paid to genius sometimes makes the fair sex forget that genius will be respected only when united with discretion. Those who have acquired fame fancy that they can afford to sacrifice reputation. I will suppose, however, that their heads shall be strong enough to bear inebriating admiration, and that their conduct shall be essentially irreproachable; yet they will show in their manners and conversation that contempt of inferior minds, and that neglect of common forms and customs, which will provoke the indignation of fools, and which cannot escape the censure of the wise. Even while we are secure of their innocence, we dislike that daring spirit in the female sex which delights to oppose the common opinions of society, and from apparent trifles we draw unfavourable omens, which experience too often confirms. You will ask me why I should suppose that wits are more liable to be spoiled by admiration than beauties, who have usually a larger share of it, and who are not more exempt from vanity? Those who are vain of trifling accomplishments, of rank, of riches, or of beauty, depend upon the world for their immediate gratification. They are sensible of their dependence; they listen with deference to the maxims, and attend with anxiety to the opinions of those from whom they expect their reward and their daily amusements. In their subjection consists their safety; while women who neither feel dependent for amusement nor for self-approbation upon company and public places are apt to consider this subjection as humiliating, if not insupportable: perceiving their own superiority, they despise

and even set at defiance, the opinions of their acquaintance of inferior abilities: contempt, where it cannot be openly retorted, produces aversion, not the less to be dreaded because constrained to silence: envy, considered as the involuntary tribute extorted by merit, is flattering to pride: and I know that many women delight to excite envy, even while they affect to fear its consequences: but they who imprudently provoke it are little aware of the torments they prepare for themselves. "Cover your face well before you disturb the hornet's nest," was a maxim of the *experienced* Catherine de Medicis.

Men of literature, if we may trust to the bitter expressions of anguish in their writings, and in their private letters, feel acutely all the stings of envy. Women, who have more susceptibility of temper, and less strength of mind, and who, from the delicate nature of their reputation, are more exposed to attack, are also less able to endure it. Malignant critics, when they cannot attack an author's peace in his writings, frequently scrutinize his private life; and every personal anecdote is published without regard to truth or propriety. How will the delicacy of the female character endure this treatment? How will her friends bear to see her pursued even in domestic retirement, if she should be wise enough to make that retirement her choice? How will they like to see premature memoirs and spurious collections of familiar letters published by needy booksellers, or designing enemies? Yet to all these things men of letters are subject; and such must literary ladies expect, if they attain to any degree of eminence. Judging, then, from the experience of our sex, I may pronounce envy to be one of the evils which women of uncommon genius have to dread. "Censure," says a celebrated writer, "is a tax which every man must pay to the public, who seeks to be eminent." Women must expect to pay it doubly.

Your daughter, perhaps, shall be above scandal. She shall despise the idle whisper and the common tattle of her sex; her soul shall be raised above the ignorant and the frivolous; she shall have a relish for higher conversation, and a taste for higher society; but where is she to find, or how is she to obtain this society? You make her incapable of friendship with her own sex. Where is she to look for friends, for companions, for equals? Among men? Among what class of men?

Not among men of business, or men of gallantry, but among men of literature.

Learned men have usually chosen for their wives, or for their companions, women who were rather below than above the standard of mediocrity: this seems to me natural and reasonable. Such men, probably, feel their own incapacity for the daily business of life, their ignorance of the world, their slovenly habits, and neglect of domestic affairs. They do not want wives who have precisely their own defects; they rather desire to find such as shall, by the opposite habits and virtues, supply their deficiencies. I do not see why two books should marry, any more than two estates. Some few exceptions might be quoted against Stewart's observations. I have just seen, under the article "A Literary Wife," in D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature, an account of Francis Phidelphus, a great scholar in the fifteenth century, who was so desirous of acquiring the Greek language in perfection that he travelled to Constantinople in search of a *Grecian wife:* the lady proved a scold. "But to do justice to the name of Theodora," as this author adds, "she has been honourably mentioned in the French Academy of Sciences." I hope this proved an adequate compensation to her husband for his domestic broils.

Happy Mad. Dacier! you found a husband suited to your taste! You and Mons. Dacier, if D'Alembert tells the story rightly, once cooked a dish in concert, by a receipt which you found in Apicius, and you both sat down and ate of your learned ragout till you were both like to die.

Were I sure, my dear friend, that every literary lady would be equally fortunate in finding in a husband a man who would sympathize in her tastes, I should diminish my formidable catalogue of evils. But, alas! M. Dacier is no more; "and we shall never live to see his fellow." Literary ladies will, I am afraid, be losers in love as well as in friendship, by the superiority. Cupid is a timid, playful child, and is frightened at the helmet of Minerva. It has been observed, that gentlemen are not apt to admire a prodigious quantity of learning and masculine acquirements in the fair sex; we usually consider a certain degree of weakness, both of mind and body, as friendly to female grace. I am not absolutely of this opinion; yet I do not see the advantage of supernatural

force, either of body or mind, to female excellence. Hercules-Spinster found his strength rather an encumbrance than an advantage.

Superiority of mind must be united with great temper and generosity, to be tolerated by those who are forced to submit to its influence. I have seen witty and learned ladies, who did not seem to think it at all incumbent upon them to sacrifice any thing to the sense of propriety. On the contrary, they seemed to take both pride and pleasure in showing the utmost stretch of their strength, regardless of the consequences, panting only for victory. Upon such occasions, when the adversary has been a husband or a father, I must acknowledge that I have felt sensations which few ladies can easily believe they excite. Airs and graces I can bear as well as another; but airs without graces no man thinks himself bound to bear, and learned airs least of all. Ladies of high rank in the court of Parnassus are apt, sometimes, to claim precedency out of their own dominions, which creates much confusion, and generally ends in their being affronted. That knowledge of the world which keeps people in their proper places they will never learn from the Muses.

Moliere has pointed out, with all the force of comic ridicule, in the Femmes Savantes, that a lady who aspires to the sublime delights of philosophy and poetry must forego the simple pleasures, and will despise the duties, of domestic life. I should not expect that my house affairs would be with haste despatched by a Desdemona, weeping over some unvarnished tale, or petrified with some history of horrors, at the very time when she should be ordering dinner or paying the butcher's bill. I should have the less hope of rousing her attention to my culinary concerns and domestic grievances, because I should probably incur her contempt for hinting at these sublunary matters, and her indignation for supposing that she ought to be employed in such degrading occupations. I have heard, that if these sublime geniuses are awakened from their reveries by the *appulse* of external circumstances, they start, and exhibit all the perturbation and amazement of *cataleptic* patients.

Sir Charles Harrington, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, addressed a copy of verses to his wife, "on Women's Vertues:" these he divides into "the private,

civill, and heroyke; the private belong to the country housewife, whom it concerneth chiefly—

"The fruits, malt, hops, to tend, to dry, to utter,
To beat, strip, spin the wool, the hemp, the flax,
Breed poultry, gather honey, try the wax,
And, more than all, to have good cheese and butter.
Then next a step, but yet a large step higher,
Came civill vertue fitter for the citty,
With modest looks, good cloths, and answers witty.
These baser things not done, but guided by her."

As for heroyke vertue, and heroyke dames, honest Sir Charles would have nothing to do with them.

Allowing, however, that you could combine all these virtues—that you could form a perfect whole, a female wonder from every creature's best—dangers still threaten you. How will you preserve your daughter from that desire of universal admiration which will ruin all your work? How will you, along with all the pride of knowledge, give her that "retiring modesty" which is supposed to have more charms for our sex than the fullest display of wit and beauty?

The *fair Pauca of Thoulouse* was so called because she was so fair that no one could live either with or without beholding her: whenever she came forth from her own mansion, which, history observes, she did very seldom, such impetuous crowds rushed to obtain a sight of her, that limbs were broken and lives were lost wherever she appeared. She ventured abroad less frequently—the evil increased—till at length the magistrates of the city issued an edict commanding the fair Pauca, under the pain of perpetual imprisonment, to appear in broad daylight for one hour, every week, in the public market-place.

Modern ladies, by frequenting public places so regularly, declare their approbation of the wholesome regulations of these prudent magistrates. Very different was the crafty policy of the prophet Mahomet, who forbade his worshippers even to paint his picture. The Turks have pictures of the hand, the foot, the features of Mahomet, but no representation of the whole face or person is allowed. The portraits of our beauties, in our exhibition-room, show a proper contempt of this insidious policy; and those learned and ingenious ladies who publish their private letters, select maxims, secret anecdotes, and family memoirs are entitled to our thanks, for thus presenting us with full-lengths of their minds.

Can you expect, my dear sir, that your daughter, with all the genius and learning which you intend to give her, should refrain from these imprudent exhibitions? Will she "yield her charms of mind with sweet delay?" Will she, in every moment of her life, recollect that the fatal desire for universal applause always defeats its own purpose, especially if the purpose be to win our love as well as our admiration? It is in vain to tell me that more enlarged ideas in our sex would alter our tastes, and alter even the associations which now influence our passions. The captive who has numbered the links of his chains, and who has even discovered how those chains are constructed, is not therefore nearer to the recovery of his liberty.

Besides, it must take a length of time to alter associations and opinions which, if not *just*, are at least *common* in our sex. You cannot expect even that conviction should operate immediately upon the public taste. You will, in a few years, have educated your daughter; and if the world be not educated exactly at the right time to judge of her perfections, to admire and love them, you will have wasted your labour, and you will have sacrificed your daughter's happiness: that happiness, analyze it as a man of the world or as a philosopher, must depend on friendship, love, the exercise of her virtues, the just performance of all the duties of life, and the self-approbation arising from the consciousness of good conduct.

I am, my dear friend,
Yours sincerely.

ANSWER

TO

THE PRECEDING LETTER.

I HAVE as little taste for Mad. Dacier's learned ragout as you can have, my dear sir; and I pity the great scholar who travelled to Constantinople for the termagant Theodora, believing, as you do, that the honourable mention made of her by the French Academy of Sciences could be no adequate compensation to her husband for domestic disquiet: but the lady's learning was not essential to his misfortune; he might have met with a scolding dame, though he had not married a Grecian. A profusion of vulgar aphorisms in the dialects of all the counties in England, proverbs in Welsh, Scottish, French, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew, might be adduced to prove that scolds are to be found among all classes of women. I am, however, willing to allow, that the more learning, and wit, and eloquence a lady possesses, the more troublesome and the more dangerous she may become as a wife or daughter, unless she is also possessed of good sense and good temper. Of your honest Sir Charles Harrington's two pattern wives, I think I should prefer the country housewife, with whom I could be sure of having good cheese and butter, to the *citty dame* with her good clothes and answers witty. I should be afraid that these answers witty might be turned against me, and might prove the torment of my life. You, who have attended to female disputants, must have remarked, that, learned or unlearned, they seldom know how to reason; they assert and declaim, employ wit, and eloquence, and sophistry, to confute, persuade, or abash their adversaries; but distinct reasoning they neither use nor comprehend. Till women learn to reason, it is in vain that they acquire learning.

You are satisfied, I am sure, with this acknowledgment. I will go farther, and at once give up to you all the learned ladies that exist, or that ever have existed: but when I use the term literary ladies, I mean women who have cultivated their understandings, not for the purposes of parade, but with the desire to make themselves useful and agreeable. I estimate the value of a woman's abilities and acquirements by the degree in which they contribute to her happiness.

You think yourself happy because you are wise, said a philosopher to a pedant. I think myself wise because I am happy.

You tell me, that even supposing I could educate my daughter so as to raise her above the common faults and follies of her sex,—even supposing I could give her an enlarged understanding, and literature free from pedantry,—she would be in danger of becoming unhappy, because she would not, among her own sex, find friends suited to her taste, nor among ours admirers adequate to her expectations: you represent her as in the situation of the poor flying-fish,—exposed to dangerous enemies in her own element, yet certain, if she tries to soar above them, of being pounced upon by the hawk-eyed critics of the higher regions.

You allow, however, that women of literature are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago; that they make a class in society, and have acquired a considerable degree of consequence, and an appropriate character; how can you then fear that a woman of cultivated understanding should be driven from the society of her own sex in search of dangerous companions among ours? In the female world she will be neither without an equal nor without a judge; she will not have much to fear from envy, because its malignant eye will not fix upon one object exclusively, when there are numbers to distract its attention, and share the stroke. The fragile nature of female friendships, the petty jealousies which break out at the ball or in the drawing-room, have been from time immemorial the jest of mankind. Trifles light as air will necessarily excite not only the jealousy but the envy of those who think only of trifles. Give them more employment for their thoughts, give them a nobler spirit of emulation, and we shall hear no more of these paltry feuds; give them more useful and more interesting subjects of con-

versation, and they become, not only more agreeable, but safer companions for each other.

Unmarried women who have stored their minds with knowledge, who have various tastes and literary occupations, who can amuse and be amused in the conversation of well-informed people, are in no danger of becoming burdensome to their friends or to society: though they may not be seen haunting every place of amusement or of public resort, they are not isolated or forlorn; by a variety of associations they are connected with the world, and their sympathy is expanded and supported by the cultivation of their understandings; nor can it sink, settle, and concentrate upon cats, parrots, and monkeys. How far the human heart may be contracted by ignorance it is difficult to determine; but I am little inclined to envy the *simple* pleasures of those whose understandings are totally uncultivated. Sir William Hamilton, in his account of the last eruption of Mount Vesuvius, gives us a curious picture of the excessive ignorance and stupidity of some nuns in a convent at Torre del Greco:—one of these nuns was found warming herself at the red-hot lava, which had rolled up to the window of her cell. It was with the greatest difficulty that these scarcely rational beings could be made to comprehend the nature of their danger; and when at last they were prevailed upon to quit the convent, and were advised to carry with them whatever they thought most valuable, they loaded themselves with sweetmeats. Those who wish for ignorant wives may find them in other parts of the world as well as in Italy.

I do not pretend, that even by cultivating my daughter's understanding I can secure for her a husband suited to her taste; it will therefore be prudent to make her felicity in some degree independent of matrimony. Many parents have sufficient kindness and foresight to provide, in point of fortune, for their daughters; but few consider that if a single life should be their choice or their doom, something more is necessary to secure respect and happiness for them in the decline of life. The silent *unreproved* pleasures of literature are the sure resource of those who have cultivated minds; those who have not must wear out their disconsolate unoccupied old age as chance directs.

When you say that men of superior understanding

dislike the appearance of extraordinary strength of mind in the fair sex, you probably mean that the display of that strength is disgusting, and you associate with the idea of strength of mind, masculine, arrogant, or pedantic manners: but there is no necessary connexion between these things; and it seems probable that the faults usually ascribed to learned ladies, like those peculiar to learned men, may have arisen in a great measure from circumstances which the progress of civilization in society has much altered.

In the times of ignorance, men of deep science were considered by the vulgar as a class of necromancers, and they were looked upon alternately with terror and admiration; and learned men imposed upon the vulgar by assuming strange airs of mystery and self-importance, wore long beards and solemn looks; they spoke and wrote in a phraseology peculiar to themselves, and affected to consider the rest of mankind as beneath their notice: but since knowledge has been generally diffused, all this affectation has been laid aside; and though we now and then hear of men of genius who indulge themselves in peculiarities, yet upon the whole the manners of literary men are not strikingly nor wilfully different from those of the rest of the world. The peculiarities of literary women will also disappear as their numbers increase. You are disgusted by their ostentation of learning. Have patience with them, my dear sir; their taste will become more simple when they have been taught by experience that this parade is offensive: even the bitter expression of your disgust may be advantageous to those whose manners are yet to be formed; they will at least learn from it what to avoid; and your letter may perhaps hereafter be of service in my daughter's education. It is scarcely to be supposed that a girl of good understanding would deliberately imitate the faults and follies which she hears ridiculed during her childhood by those whom she esteems.

As to your dread of prodigies, that will subside: prodigies are heard of most frequently during the ages of ignorance. A woman may now possess a considerable stock of information without being gazed upon as a miracle of learning; and there is not much danger of her being vain of accomplishments which cease to be astonishing. Nor will her peace be disturbed by the idle remarks of the ignorant vulgar.—A literary lady is

no longer a sight; the spectacle is now too common to attract curiosity; the species of animal is too well known even to admit of much exaggeration in the description of its appearance. A lady riding on horseback upon a side-saddle is not thought a wonderful thing by the common people in England; but when an English lady rode upon a side-saddle in an Italian city, where the sight was unusual, she was universally gazed at by the populace; to some she appeared an object of astonishment, to others of compassion:—"Ah! poverina," they exclaimed, "n'ha che una gamba!"

The same objects excite different emotions in different situations; and to judge what will astonish or delight any given set of people some years hence, we must consider, not merely what is the fashion of to-day, but whither the current of opinion runs, and what is likely to be the fashion of hereafter.—You must have observed that the public opinion is at present more favourable to the cultivation of the understanding of the female sex than it was some years ago; more attention is paid to the education of women, more knowledge and literature are expected from them in society. From the literary lady of the present day something more is expected than that she should know how to spell and to write better than Swift's celebrated Stella, whom he reproves for writing *villian* and *daenger:* perhaps this very Stella was an object of envy in her own day to those who were her inferiors in literature. No man wishes his wife to be obviously less cultivated than those of her own rank; and something more is now required, even from ordinary talents, than what distinguished the accomplished lady of the seventeenth century. What the standard of excellence may be in the next age we cannot ascertain, but we may guess that the taste for literature will continue to be progressive; therefore, even if you assume that the education of the female sex should be guided by the taste and reigning opinions of ours, and that it should be the object of their lives to win and keep our hearts, you must admit the expediency of attending to that fashionable demand for literature and the fine arts which has arisen in society.

No woman can foresee what may be the taste of the man with whom she may be united; much of her happiness, however, will depend upon her being able to conform her taste to his: for this reason I should there-

fore, in female education, cultivate the general powers of the mind; rather than any particular faculty. I do not desire to make my daughter merely a musician, a painter, or a poet; I do not desire to make her merely a botanist, a mathematician, or a chymist; but I wish to give her early the habit of industry and attention, the love of knowledge, and the power of reasoning: these will enable her to attend to excellence in any pursuit to which she may direct her talents. You will observe, that many things which formerly were thought above the comprehension of women, or unfit for their sex, are now acknowledged to be perfectly within the compass of their abilities, and suited to their situation.—Formerly the fair sex was kept in Turkish ignorance; every means of acquiring knowledge was discountenanced by fashion, and impracticable even to those who despised fashion; our books of science were full of unintelligible jargon, and mystery veiled pompous ignorance from public contempt: but now writers must offer their discoveries to the public in distinct terms, which everybody may understand; technical language no longer supplies the place of knowledge, and the art of teaching has been carried to such perfection, that a degree of knowledge may now with ease be acquired in the course of a few years, which formerly it was the business of a life to attain. All this is much in favour of female literature. Ladies have become ambitious to superintend the education of their children, and hence they have been induced to instruct themselves, that they may be able to direct and inform their pupils. The mother who now aspires to be the esteemed and beloved instructress of her children must have a considerable portion of knowledge. Science has of late "*been enlisted under the banners of imagination*," by the irresistible charms of genius; by the same power her votaries will be led "*from the looser analogies which dress out the imagery of poetry, to the stricter ones which form the ratiocination of philosophy.*"*—Botany has become fashionable; in time it may become useful, if it be not so already. Chymistry will follow botany. Chymistry is a science well suited to the talents and situation of women; it is not a science of parade; it affords occupation and infinite variety; it demands no bodily strength; it can be pursued in retire-

* Vide preface to Darwin's Botanic Garden.

ment; it applies immediately to useful and domestic purposes: and while the ingenuity of the most inventive mind may in this science be exercised, there is no danger of inflaming the imagination, because the mind is intent upon realities, the knowledge that is acquired is exact, and the pleasure of the pursuit is a sufficient reward for the labour.

A clear and ready knowledge of arithmetic is surely no useless acquirement for those who are to regulate the expenses of a family. Economy is not the mean "penny wise and pound foolish" policy which some suppose it to be; it is the art of calculation joined to the habit of order, and the power of proportioning our wishes to the means of gratifying them. The little pilfering temper of a wife is despicable and odious to every man of sense; but there is a judicious, graceful species of economy, which has no connexion with an avaricious temper, and which, as it depends upon the understanding, can be expected only from cultivated minds. Women who have been well educated, far from despising domestic duties, will hold them in high respect; because they will see that the whole happiness of life is made up of the happiness of each particular day and hour, and that much of the enjoyment of these must depend upon the punctual practice of those virtues which are more valuable than splendid.

It is not, I hope, your opinion, that ignorance is the best security for female virtue. If this connexion between virtue and ignorance could once be clearly proved, we ought to drown our books deeper than ever plummet sounded: I say *we*—for the danger extends equally to both sexes, unless you assert that the duties of men rest upon a more certain foundation than the duties of the other sex: if our virtues can be demonstrated to be advantageous, why should theirs suffer for being exposed to the light of reason? All social virtue conduces to our own happiness or that of our fellow-creatures; can it weaken the sense of duty to illustrate this truth? Having once pointed out to the understanding of a sensible woman the necessary connexion between her virtues and her happiness, must not those virtues and the means of preserving them, become in her eyes objects of the most interesting importance? But you fear, that even if their conduct continued to be irreproachable, the manners of women might be rendered less delicate by the in-

crease of their knowledge; you dislike in the female sex that daring spirit which despises the common forms of society, and which breaks through the reserve and delicacy of female manners:—so do I:—and the best method to make my pupil respect these things is to show her how they are indispensably connected with the largest interests of society: surely this perception of the utility of forms apparently trifling must be a strong security to the prudential reserve of the sex, and far superior to the automatic habits of those who submit to the conventions of the world without consideration or conviction. Habit, confirmed by reason, assumes the rank of virtue. The motives that restrain from vice must be increased by the clear conviction that vice and wretchedness are inseparably united.

Do not, however, imagine, my dear sir, that I shall attempt to lay moral demonstration before *a child*, who could not possibly comprehend my meaning; do not imagine, that because I intend to cultivate my daughter's understanding, I shall neglect to give her those early habits of reserve and modesty which constitute the female character.—Believing, as I do, that woman, as well as man, may be called a bundle of habits, I shall be peculiarly careful, during my child's early education, to give her as many good habits as possible; by degrees as her understanding, that is to say, as her knowledge and power of reasoning, shall increase, I can explain the advantages of these habits, and confirm their power by the voice of reason. I lose no time, I expose myself to no danger by this system. On the contrary, those who depend entirely upon the force of custom and prejudice expose themselves to infinite danger. If once their pupils begin to reflect upon their own hoodwinked education, they will probably suspect that they have been deceived in all that they have been taught, and they will burst their bonds with indignation. Credulity is always rash in the moment she detects the impositions that have been practised upon her easy temper. In this inquiring age, few have any chance of passing through life without being excited to examine the motives and principles from which they act: is it not, therefore, prudent to cultivate the reasoning faculty, by which alone this examination can be made with safety? A false argument, a repartee, the charms of wit or eloquence, the voice of fashion, of folly, of numbers, might, if she had no substantial reasons to support

her cause, put virtue, not only out of countenance, but out of humour.

You speak of moral instinct. As far as I understand the term, it implies certain habits early acquired from education; to these I would add the power of reasoning, and then, and not till then, I should think myself safe: for I have observed that the pupils of habit are utterly confounded when they are placed in circumstances different from those to which they have been accustomed. It has been remarked by travellers and naturalists, that animals, notwithstanding their boasted instinctive knowledge, sometimes make strange and fatal mistakes in their conduct, when they are placed in new situations: destitute of the reasoning faculty, and deceived by resemblances, they mistake poison for food. Thus the bull-frog will swallow burning charcoal, mistaking it for fire-flies; and the European hogs and poultry which travelled to Surinam poisoned themselves by eating plants that were unknown to them.*

You seem, my dear sir, to be afraid that truth should not keep so firm a hold upon the mind as prejudice; and you produce an allusion to justify your fears. You tell us that civil society is like a building, and you warn me not to tear down the ivy which clings to the walls, and braces the loose stones together.—I believe that ivy, in some situations, tends to pull down the walls to which it clings.—You think it is not worth while to cultivate the understandings of women, because you say that you have no security that the conviction of their reason will have any permanent good effect upon their conduct; and to persuade me of this, you bid me observe, that men, who are superior to women in strength of mind and judgment, are frequently misled by their passions.—By this mode of argument, you may conclude that reason is totally useless to the whole human race; but you cannot, with any show of justice, infer that it ought to be monopolized by one-half of mankind. But why should you quarrel with reason because passion sometimes conquers her?—You should endeavour to strengthen the connexion between theory and practice, if it be not sufficiently strong already; but you can gain nothing by destroying theory.—Happiness is your aim; but your unpractised or unsteady hand does not obey your will:

* Vide Stedman's Voyage to Surinam, vol. ii. p. 47.

you do not at the first trial hit the mark precisely.—Would you, because you are awkward, insist upon being blind?

The strength of mind which enables people to govern themselves by their reason is not always connected with abilities even in their most cultivated state: I deplore the instances which I have seen of this truth, but I do not despair: on the contrary, I am excited to inquire into the causes of this phenomenon; nor, because I see some evil, would I sacrifice the good upon a bare motive of suspicion. It is a contradiction to say, that giving the power to discern what is good is giving a disposition to prefer what is bad. I acknowledge with regret, that women who have been but half-instructed, who have seen only superficially the relations of moral and political ideas, and who have obtained but an imperfect knowledge of the human heart, have conducted themselves so as to disgrace their talents and their sex: these are conspicuous and melancholy examples, which are cited oftener with malice than with pity. But I appeal to examples among our contemporaries, to which every man of literature will immediately advert, to prove, that where the female understanding has been properly cultivated, women have not only obtained admiration by their useful abilities, but respect by their exemplary conduct.

I apprehend that many of the errors into which women of literature have fallen may have arisen from an improper choice of books. Those who read chiefly works of imagination receive from them false ideas of life and of the human heart. Many of these productions I should keep as I would deadly poison from my child; I should rather endeavour to turn her attention to science than to romance, and to give her early that taste for truth and utility which, when once implanted, can scarcely be eradicated. There is a wide difference between innocence and ignorance: ignorant women may have minds the most debased and perverted, while the most cultivated understanding may be united with the most perfect innocence and simplicity.

Even if literature were of no other use to the fair sex than to supply them with employment, I should think the time dedicated to the cultivation of their minds well bestowed: they are surely better occupied when they are reading or writing than when coquetting

or gaming, losing their fortunes or their characters. You despise the writings of women; you think that they might have made a better use of the pen than to write plays, and poetry, and romances. Considering that the pen was to women a new instrument, I think they have made at least as good a use of it as learned men did of the needle some centuries ago, when they set themselves to determine how many spirits could stand upon its point, and were ready to tear one another to pieces in the discussion of this sublime question. Let the sexes mutually forgive each other their follies; or, what is much better, let them combine their talents for their general advantage. You say, that the experiments we have made do not encourage us to proceed—that the increased care and pains which have been of late years bestowed upon female education have produced no adequate returns; but you in the same breath allow that among your contemporaries, whom you prudently forbear to mention, there are some instances of great talents applied to useful purposes. Did you expect that the fruits of good cultivation should appear before the seed was sown? You triumphantly enumerate the disadvantages to which women, from the laws and customs of society, are liable: they cannot converse freely with men of wit, science, and learning, nor even with the artist, or artificers; they are excluded from academies, public libraries, &c. Even our politeness prevents us, you say, from ever speaking plain truth and sense to the fair sex:—every assistance that foreign or domestic ingenuity can invent to encourage literary studies is, as you boast, almost exclusively ours: and after pointing out all these causes for the inferiority of women in knowledge, you ask for a list of the inventions and discoveries of those who, by your own statement of the question, have not been allowed opportunities for observation. With the insulting injustice of an Egyptian task-master, you demand the work, and deny the necessary materials.

I admit, that with respect to the opportunities of acquiring knowledge, institutions and manners are, as you have stated, much in favour of our sex; but your argument concerning *time* appears to me to be unfounded. Women who do not love dissipation must have more time for the cultivation of their understandings than men can have, if you compute the whole of

life: while the knowledge of the learned languages continues to form an indispensable part of a gentleman's education, many years of childhood and youth must be devoted to their attainment. During these studies, the general cultivation of the understanding is in some degree retarded. All the intellectual powers are cramped except the memory, which is sufficiently exercised, but which is overloaded with words, and with words that are not always understood. The genius of living and of dead languages differs so much, that the pains which are taken to write elegant Latin frequently spoil the English style. Girls usually write much better than boys; they think and express their thoughts clearly at an age when young men can scarcely write an easy letter upon any common occasion. Women do not read the good authors of antiquity as school-books, but they can have excellent translations of most of them when they are capable of tasting the beauties of composition. I know that it is supposed we cannot judge of the classics by translations, and I am sensible that much of the merit of the originals may be lost; but I think the difference in pleasure is more than overbalanced to women by the *time* that is saved, and by the labour and misapplication of abilities which are spared. If they do not acquire a classical taste, neither do they imbibe classic prejudices; nor are they early disgusted with literature by pedagogues, lexicons, grammars, and all the melancholy apparatus of learning. Women begin to taste the pleasures of reading, and the best authors in the English language are their amusement, just at the age when young men, disgusted by their studies, begin to be ashamed of alluding to literature among their companions. Travelling, lounging, field-sports, gaming, and what is called pleasure in various shapes, usually fill the interval between quitting the university and settling for life. When this period is past, business, the necessity of pursuing a profession, the ambition to shine in parliament, or to rise in public life, occupy a large portion of their lives. In many professions the understanding is but partially cultivated; and general literature must be neglected by those who are occupied in earning bread or amassing riches for their family: men of genius are often heard to complain, that in the pursuit of a profession they are obliged to contract their inquiries and concentrate their powers; statesmen

lament that they must often pursue the *expedient* even when they discern that it is not the *right*; and men of letters, who earn their bread by their writings, inveigh bitterly against the tyranny of booksellers, who degrade them to the state of "literary artisans."—"Literary artisans" is the comprehensive term under which a celebrated philosopher* classes all those who cultivate only particular talents or powers of the mind, and who suffer their other faculties to lose all strength and vigour for want of exercise. The other sex have no such constraint upon their understandings; neither the necessity of earning bread, nor the ambition to shine in public affairs, hurry or prejudice their minds: in domestic life they have leisure to be wise.

Far from being ashamed that so little has been done by female abilities in science and useful literature, I am surprised that so much has been effected. On natural history, on criticism, on moral philosophy, on education, they have written with elegance, eloquence, precision, and ingenuity. Your complaint that women do not turn their attention to useful literature is surely ill-timed. If they merely increased the number of books in circulation, you might declaim against them with success; but when they add to the general fund of useful and entertaining knowledge, you cannot with any show of justice prohibit their labours; there can be no danger that the market should ever be overstocked with produce of intrinsic worth.

The despotic monarchs of Spain forbid the exploring of any new gold or silver mines without the express permission of government, and they have ordered several rich ones to be shut up, as not equal to the cost of working. There is some *appearance* of reason for this exertion of power: it may prevent the world from being encumbered by nominal wealth. But the Dutch merchants, who burn whole cargoes of spice lest they should lower the price of the commodity in which they deal, show a mean spirit of monopoly which can plead no plausible excuse. I hope you feel nothing like a disposition to Spanish despotism or Dutch jealousy, when you would exclude female talents from the literary market.

* Professor Dugald Stewart.—History of the Philosophy of the Human Mind

You observe, that since censure is a tax which every man must pay who aspires to eminence, women must expect to pay it doubly. Why the tax should not be equally assessed, I am at a loss to conjecture: but in fact it does not fall very heavy upon those who have any portion of philosophy: they may, with *the poet of reason*, exclaim—

"Though doubly tax'd, how little have I lost!"

Your dread of the envy attendant upon literary excellence might with equal justice be extended to every species of merit, and might be urged against all that is good in art or nature. Scandal is said to attack always the fairest characters, as the birds always peck most at the ripest fruit; but would you for this reason have no fruit ripen, or no characters aspire to excellence?

But if it be your opinion that women are naturally inferior to us in capacity, why do you feel so much apprehension of their becoming eminent, or of their obtaining power, in consequence of the cultivation of their understandings? These expressions of scorn and jealousy neutralize each other. If your contempt were unmixed and genuine, it would be cool and tranquil, inclining rather to pity than to anger.

You say that in all animals the female is the inferior; and you have never seen any reason to believe that the human species affords an exception to this observation. Superiority among brutes depends upon force; superiority among the human species depends upon reason: that men are naturally stronger than women is evident; but strength of mind has no necessary connexion with strength of body; and intellectual ability has ever conquered mere physical force, from the times of Ajax and Ulysses to the present day. In civilized nations, that species of superiority which belongs to force is much reduced in value among the higher classes of society. The baron who struck his sword into an oak, and defied any one to pull out the weapon, would not in these days fill the hearts of his antagonists with terror; nor would the twisting of a horse-shoe be deemed a feat worthy to decide a nation in their choice of a king. The days of chivalry are no more: the knight no longer sallies forth in ponderous armour,

mounted upon "a steed as invulnerable as himself."* The damsel no longer depends upon the prowess of his mighty arm to maintain the glory of her charms, or the purity of her fame: grim barons, and castles guarded by monsters and all-devouring dragons, are no more; and from being the champions and masters of the fair sex, we are now become their friends and companions. We have not surely been losers by this change; the fading glories of romance have vanished, but the real permanent pleasures of domestic life remain in their stead; and what the fair have lost of adulation they have gained in friendship.

Do not, my dear sir, call me a champion for the rights of woman; I am too much their friend to be their partisan, and I am more anxious for their happiness than intent upon a metaphysical discussion of their rights: their happiness is so nearly connected with ours, that it seems to me absurd to manage any argument so as to set the two sexes at variance by vain contention for superiority. It ought not to be our object to make an invidious division of privileges, or an ostentatious declaration of rights, but to determine what is most for our general advantage.

You fear that the minds of women should be enlarged and cultivated, lest their power in society and their liberty should consequently increase. Observe that the word *liberty*, applied to the female sex, conveys alarming ideas to our minds, because we do not stay to define the term; we have a confused notion that it implies want of reserve, want of delicacy; boldness of manners, or of conduct; in short, liberty to do wrong. Surely this is a species of liberty which knowledge can never make desirable. Those who understand the real interests of society, who clearly see the connexion between virtue and happiness, must know that *the liberty to do wrong* is synonymous with *the liberty to make themselves miserable*. This is a privilege of which none would choose to avail themselves. When reason defines the term, there is no danger of its being misunderstood; but imagination and false associations often make this word liberty, in its perverted sense, sound delightful to those who have been kept in ignorance and slavery.

* Condorcet.—History of the Progress of the Human Mind.

Girls who have been disciplined under the strict high hand of authority are apt to fancy that to escape from habitual restraint, to exercise their own will, no matter how, is to be free and to be happy.—Hence innumerable errors in their conduct; hence their mistaken notions of liberty, and that inordinate ambition to acquire power, which ignorant, ill-educated women show in every petty struggle, where they are permitted to act in private life. You believe this temper to be inherent in the sex; and a man who has just published a book upon the Spanish bull-fights declares his belief that the passion for bull-fighting is innate in the breast of every Spaniard.—Do not, my friend, assign two causes for an effect where one is obviously adequate. The disposition to love command need not be attributed to any innate cause in the minds of females, while it may be fairly ascribed to their erroneous education.

I shall early cultivate my daughter's judgment, to prevent her from being wilful or positive; I shall leave her to choose for herself in all those trifles upon which the happiness of childhood depends; and I shall gradually teach her to reflect upon the consequences of her actions, to compare and judge of her feelings, and to compute the morn and evening to her day. I shall thus, I hope, induce her to reason upon all subjects, even upon matters of taste, where many women think it sufficient to say I admire; or, I detest:—Oh charming! or, Oh horrible! People who have reasons for their preferences and aversions are never so provokingly zealous in the support of their own tastes as those usually are who have no arguments to convince themselves or others that they are in the right.

But you are apprehensive that the desire to govern which women show in domestic life should obtain a larger field to display itself in public affairs. It seems to me impossible that they can ever acquire the species of direct power which you dread: their influence must be private; it is therefore of the utmost consequence that it should be judicious. It was not Themistocles, but his wife and child, who governed the Athenians; it was therefore of some consequence that the boy who governed the mother, who governed her husband, should not be a spoiled child; and consequently that the mother who educated this child should be a reasonable woman. Thus are human affairs chained together; and female

influence is a necessary and important link, which you cannot break without destroying the whole.

If it be your object, my dear sir, to monopolize power for our sex, you cannot possibly secure it better from the wishes of the other than by enlightening their minds and enlarging their views: they will then be convinced, not by the voice of the moralist, who puts us to sleep while he persuades us of the vanity of all sublunary enjoyments, but by their own awakened observation: they will be convinced that power is generally an evil to its possessor; that to those who really wish for the good of their fellow-creatures it is at best but a painful trust. The mad philosopher in Rasselas, who imagined that he regulated the weather and distributed the seasons, could never enjoy a moment's repose, lest he should not make "to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine." Those who are intrusted with the government of nations must, if they have an acute sense of justice, experience something like the anxiety felt by this unfortunate monarch of the clouds.

Lord Kenyon has lately decided that a woman may be *an overseer of a parish*; but you are not, I suppose, apprehensive that many ladies of cultivated understanding should become ambitious of this honour. One step further in reasoning, and a woman would desire as little to be a queen or an empress as to be the overseer of a parish. You may perhaps reply, that men, even those of the greatest understanding, have been ambitious, and fond even to excess of power. That ambition is the glorious fault of heroes, I allow; but heroes are not always men of the most enlarged understandings—they are possessed by the spirit of military adventure—an infectious spirit, which men catch from one another in the course of their education: to this contagion the fair sex are not exposed.

At all events, if you suppose that women are likely to acquire influence in the state, it is prudent to enlighten their understandings, that they may not make an absurd or pernicious use of their power. You appeal to history, to prove that great calamities have ensued whenever the female sex has obtained power; yet you acknowledge that we cannot with certainty determine whether these evils have been the effects of our trusting them with liberty, or of our neglecting pre-

viously to instruct them in the use of it: upon the decision of this question rests your whole argument. In a most awful tone of declamation, you bid me follow the history of female nature, from the court of Augustus to that of Lewis XIV., and tell you whether I can hesitate to acknowledge, that the liberty and influence of women have always been the greatest during the decline of empires. But you have not proved to me that women had more knowledge, that they were better educated, at the court of Augustus, or during the reign of Lewis XIV., than at any other place, or during any other period of the world; therefore your argument gains nothing by the admission of your assertions; and unless I could trace the history of female education, it is vain for me to follow what you call the history of female nature.

It is, however, remarkable, that the means by which the sex have hitherto obtained that species of power which they have abused have arisen chiefly from their personal, and not from their mental, qualifications; from their skill in the arts of persuasion, and from their accomplishments; not from their superior powers of reasoning, or from the cultivation of their understanding. The most refined species of coquetry can undoubtedly be practised in the highest perfection by women, who to personal graces unite all the fascination of wit and eloquence. There is infinite danger in permitting such women to obtain power without having acquired habits of reasoning. Rousseau admires these sirens; but the system of Rousseau, pursued to its fullest extent, would overturn the world, would make every woman a Cleopatra, and every man an Antony; it would destroy all domestic virtue, all domestic happiness, all the pleasures of truth and love. In the midst of that delirium of passion to which Antony gave the name of love, what must have been the state of his degraded, wretched soul, when he could suspect his mistress of designs upon his life? To cure him of these suspicions, she at a banquet poisoned the flowers of his garland, waited till she saw him inflamed with wine, then persuaded him to break the tops of his flowers into his goblet, and just stopped him when the cup was at his lips, exclaiming, "Those flowers are poisoned: you see that I do not want the means of destroying you, if you were become tiresome to me, or if I could live without you." And

this is the happy pair who instituted the orders of *The inimitable lovers!* and *The companions in death!**

These are the circumstances which should early be pointed out, to both sexes, with all the energy of truth: let them learn that the most exquisite arts of the most consummate coquette could not obtain the confidence of him who sacrificed to her charms the empire of the world. It is from the experience of the past that we must form our judgment of the future. How unjustly you accuse me of desiring to destroy the memory of past experiments, the wisdom collected by the labour of ages! *You* would prohibit this treasure of knowledge to one-half of the human species; and *I*, on the contrary, would lay it open to all my fellow-creatures. I speak as if it were actually in our option to retard or to accelerate the intellectual progress of the sex; but in fact it is absolutely out of our power to drive the fair sex back to their former state of darkness: the art of printing has totally changed their situation; their eyes are opened,—the classic page is unrolled, they *will* read: all we can do is to induce them to read with judgment—to enlarge their minds so that they may take a full view of their interests and of ours. I have no fear that the truth upon any subject should injure my daughter's mind; it is falsehood that I dread. I dread that she should acquire preposterous notions of love, of happiness, from the furtive perusal of vulgar novels, or from the clandestine conversation of ignorant waiting-maids: I dread that she should acquire, even from the enchanting eloquence of Rousseau, the fatal idea, that cunning and address are the natural resources of her sex; that coquetry is necessary to attract, and dissimulation to preserve, the heart of man. I would not, however, proscribe an author because I believe some of his opinions to be false; I would have my daughter read and compare various books, and correct her judgment of books by listening to the conversation of persons of sense and experience. Women may learn much of what is essential to their happiness from the unprejudiced testimony of a father or a brother: they may learn to distinguish the pictures of real life from paintings of imaginary manners and passions which never had, which never can have, any existence. They may

* Vide Plutarch.

learn that it is not the reserve of hypocrisy, the affected demeanour either of a prude or a coquette, that we admire; but it is the simple, graceful, natural modesty of a woman, whose mind is innocent. With this belief impressed upon her heart, do you think, my dear friend, that she who can reflect and reason would take the means to disgust where she wishes to please? or that she would incur contempt, when she knows how to secure esteem? Do you think that she will employ artifice to entangle some heedless heart, when she knows that every heart which can be so won is not worth the winning? She will not look upon our sex either as dupes or tyrants; she will be aware of the important difference between evanescent passion, and that affection founded upon mutual esteem which forms the permanent happiness of life.

I am not apprehensive, my dear sir, that Cupid should be scared by the helmet of Minerva; he has conquered his idle fears, and has been familiarized to Minerva and the Muses:

> "And now of power his darts are found
> Twice ten thousand times to wound."*

That the power of beauty over the human heart is infinitely increased by the associated ideas of virtue and intellectual excellence has been long acknowledged. A set of features, however regular, inspire but little admiration or enthusiasm, unless they be irradiated by that sunshine of the soul which creates beauty. The expression of intelligent benevolence renders even homely features and cheeks of sorry grain† agreeable; and it has been observed, that the most lasting attachments have not always been excited by the most beautiful of the sex. As men have become more cultivated, they have attended more to the expression of amiable and estimable qualities in the female countenance; and in all probability the taste for this species of beauty will increase among the good and wise. When agreeable qualities are connected with the view of any particular form, we learn to love that form, though it may have no other merit. Women who have no pretensions to Grecian beauty may, if their countenances are expressive

* See the introduction of Cupid to the Muses and Minerva, in a charming poem of Mrs. Barbauld's—"*The origin of song-writing.*"—Would it not afford a beautiful subject for a picture?

† Milton.

of good temper and good sense, have some chance of pleasing men of cultivated minds.—In an excellent Review* of Gillier's Essays on the Causes of the Perfection of Antique Sculpture, which I have just seen, it is observed, that our exclusive admiration of the physiognomy of the Greeks arises from prejudice, since the Grecian countenance cannot be necessarily associated with any of the perfections which now distinguish accomplished or excellent men. This remark in a popular periodical work shows that the public mind is not bigoted in matters of taste, and that the standard is no longer supposed to be fixed by the voice of ancient authority. The changes that are made in the opinions of our sex as to female beauty, according to the different situations in which women are placed, and the different qualities on which we fix the idea of their excellence, are curious and striking. Ask a northern Indian, says a traveller who has lately visited them, ask a northern Indian, What is beauty? and he will answer, a broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek-bones, three or four broad black lines across each cheek, a low forehead, a large broad chin, a clumsy hook nose, &c. These beauties are greatly heightened, or at least rendered more valuable, when the possessor is capable of dressing all kinds of skins, converting them into the different parts of their clothing, and able to carry eight or ten stone in summer, or haul a much greater weight in winter.—Prince Matanabbee, adds this author, prided himself much upon the height and strength of his wives, and would frequently say, few women could carry or haul heavier loads. If, some years ago, you had asked a Frenchman what he meant by beauty, he would have talked to you of *l'air piquant*, *l'air spirituel*, *l'air noble*, *l'air comme il faut*, and he would have referred ultimately to that *je ne sçais quoi*, for which Parisian belles were formerly celebrated. French women mixed much in company, the charms of what they called *esprit* were admired in conversation, and the *petit minois* denoting lively wit and coquetry became fashionable in France, while gallantry and a taste for the pleasures of *society* prevailed. The countenance expressive of sober sense and modest reserve continues to be the taste of the English, who wisely prefer the pleasures of domestic

* Appendix to Monthly Review, from January to April, 1798, page 516.

life. Domestic life should, however, be enlivened and embellished with all the wit and vivacity and politeness for which French women were once admired, without admitting any of their vices or follies. The more men of literature and polished manners desire to spend their time in their own families, the more they must wish that their wives and daughters may have tastes and habits similar to their own. If they can meet with conversation suited to their taste at home, they will not be driven to clubs for companions; they will invite the men of wit and science of their acquaintance to their own houses, instead of appointing some place of meeting from which ladies are to be excluded. This mixture of the talents and knowledge of both sexes must be advantageous to the interests of society, by increasing domestic happiness. Private *virtues* are public benefits: if each bee were content in his cell, there could be no grumbling hive; and if each cell were complete, the whole fabric must be perfect.

When you asserted, my dear sir, that learned men usually prefer for their wives women rather below than above the standard of mental mediocrity, you forgot many instances strongly in contradiction of this opinion. Since I began this letter, I met with the following pathetic passage, which I cannot forbear transcribing.

"The greatest part of the observations contained in the foregoing pages were derived from a lady, who is now beyond the reach of being affected by any thing in this sublunary world. Her beneficence of disposition induced her never to overlook any fact or circumstance that fell within the sphere of her observation, which promised to be in any respect beneficial to her fellow-creatures. To her gentle influence the public are indebted, if they be indeed indebted at all, for whatever useful hints may at any time have dropped from my pen. A being, she thought, who must depend so much as man does on the assistance of others, owes, as a debt to his fellow-creatures, the communication of the little useful knowledge that chance may have thrown in his way. Such has been my constant aim; such were the views of the wife of my bosom, the friend of my heart, who supported and assisted me in all my pursuits. I now feel a melancholy satisfaction in contemplating those objects she once delighted to elucidate."*

* J. Anderson—Essay on the Management of a Dairy.

Dr Gregory, Haller, and Lord Lyttleton, have, in the language of affection, poetry, and truth, described the pleasures which men of science and literature enjoy in a union with women who can sympathize in all their thoughts and feelings, who can converse with them as equals, and live with them as friends; who can assist them in the important and delightful duty of educating their children; who can make their family their most agreeable society, and their home the attractive centre of happiness.

Can women of uncultivated understandings make such wives or such mothers?

LETTERS

OF

JULIA AND CAROLINE.

No penance can absolve their guilty fame,
Nor tears, that wash out guilt, can wash out shame.

PRIOR.

LETTER I.

JULIA TO CAROLINE.

IN vain, dear Caroline, you urge me to *think;* I profess only to *feel.*

"*Reflect upon my own feelings!* Analyze my notions of happiness! explain to you my system!"—My system! But I have no system; *that* is the very difference between us. My notions of happiness cannot be resolved into simple, fixed principles. Nor dare I even attempt to analyze them; the subtile essence would escape in the process: just punishment to the alchymist in morality!

You, Caroline, are of a more sedate, contemplative character. Philosophy becomes the rigid mistress of your life, enchanting enthusiasm the companion of mine. Suppose she lead me now and then in pursuit of a meteor; am not I happy in the chase? When one illusion vanishes, another shall appear, and, still leading me forward towards an horizon that retreats as I advance, the happy prospect of futurity shall vanish only with my existence.

"Reflect upon my feelings!" Dear Caroline, is it not enough that I do feel? All that I dread is that

apathy which philosophers call tranquillity. You tell me, that by continually *indulging*, I shall weaken my natural sensibility; are not all the faculties of the soul improved, refined by exercise? and why shall *this* be excepted from the general law?

But I must not, you tell me, indulge my taste for romance and poetry, lest I waste that sympathy on *fiction* which *reality* so much better deserves. My dear friend, let us cherish the precious propensity to pity! no matter what the object; sympathy with fiction or reality arises from the same disposition.

When the sigh of compassion rises in my bosom, when the spontaneous tear starts from my eye, what frigid moralist shall "stop the genial current of the soul;" shall say to the tide of passion, *So far shalt thou go, and no farther?* Shall man presume to circumscribe that which Providence has left unbounded?

But, O Caroline! if our feelings as well as our days are numbered; if, by the immutable law of nature, apathy be the sleep of passion, and languor the necessary consequence of exertion; if indeed the pleasures of life are so ill-proportioned to its duration, oh may that duration be shortened to me! Kind Heaven, let not my soul die before my body!

Yes, if at this instant my guardian genius were to appear before me, and offering me the choice of my future destiny; on the one hand, the even temper, the poised judgment, the stoical serenity of philosophy; on the other, the eager genius, the exquisite sensibility of enthusiasm: if the genius said to me "Choose" —the lot of the one is great pleasure, and great pain—great virtues and great defects—ardent hope, and severe disappointment—ecstasy and despair: the lot of the other is calm happiness unmixed with violent grief—virtue without heroism—respect without admiration—and a length of life, in which to every moment is allotted its proper portion of felicity:— Gracious genius! I should exclaim, if half my existence must be the sacrifice, take it; *enthusiasm is my choice.*

Such, my dear friend, would be my choice were I a man; as a woman, how much more readily should I determine!

What has woman to do with philosophy? The

graces flourish not under her empire: a woman's part in life is to please, and Providence has assigned to her *success* all the pride and pleasure of her being.

Then leave us our weakness, leave us our follies; they are our best arms:—

"Leave us to trifle with more grace and ease,
Whom folly pleases and whose follies please."

The moment grave sense and solid merit appear, adieu the bewitching caprice, the "*lively nonsense*," the exquisite, yet childish susceptibility which charms, interests, captivates. Believe me, our *amiable defects* win more than our noblest virtues. Love requires sympathy, and sympathy is seldom connected with a sense of superiority. I envy none their "*painful pre-eminence.*" Alas! whether it be deformity or excellence which makes us say with Richard the Third,

"I am myself alone!"

it comes to much the same thing. Then let us, Caroline, content ourselves to gain in love what we lose in esteem.

Man is to be held only by the *slightest* chains; with the idea that he can break them at pleasure, he submits to them in sport; but his pride revolts against the power to which his *reason* tells him he ought to submit. What then can woman gain by reason? Can she prove by argument thet she is amiable? or demonstrate that she is an angel?

Vain was the industry of the artist who, to produce the image of perfect beauty, selected from the fairest faces their most faultless features. Equally vain must be the efforts of the philosopher, who would excite the idea of mental perfection by combining an assemblage of party-coloured virtues.

Such, I had almost said, is my *system*, but I mean my *sentiments*. I am not accurate enough to compose a *system*. After all, how vain are systems, and theories, and reasonings!

We may *declaim*, but what do we really know? All is uncertainty—human prudence does nothing—fortune every thing: I leave every thing therefore to fortune; *you* leave nothing. Such is the difference between us.

—and which shall be the happiest, time alone can decide.

Farewell, dear Caroline; I love you better than I thought I could love a philosopher.

Your ever affectionate

JULIA.

LETTER II.

CAROLINE'S ANSWER TO JULIA.

AT the hazard of ceasing to be "*charming*," "*interesting*," "*captivating*," I must, dear Julia, venture to reason with you, to examine your favourite doctrine of "*amiable defects*," and, if possible, to dissipate that unjust dread of perfection which you seem to have continually before your eyes.

It is the sole object of a woman's life, you say, to *please*. Her amiable defects *please* more than her noblest virtues, her follies more than her wisdom, her caprice more than her temper, and *something*, a nameless something, which no art can imitate and no science can teach, more than all.

Art, you say, spoils the graces and corrupts the heart of woman; and at best can produce only a cold model of perfection; which, though perhaps strictly conformable to *rule*, can never touch the soul, or please the unprejudiced taste, like one simple stroke of genuine nature.

I have often observed, dear Julia, that an inaccurate use of words produces such a strange confusion in all reasoning, that in the heat of debate, the combatants, unable to distinguish their friends from their foes, fall promiscuously on both. A skilful disputant knows well how to take advantage of this confusion, and sometimes endeavours to create it. I do not know whether I am to suspect you of such a design; but I must guard against it.

You have with great address availed yourself of the *two* ideas connected with the word *art*: first, as opposed to simplicity, it implies artifice; and next, as opposed to ignorance, it comprehends all the improvements of science, which, leading us to search for general causes,

rewards us with a dominion over their dependent effects: that which instructs how to pursue the objects which we may have in view with the greatest probability of success. All men who act from general principles are so far philosophers. Their objects may be, when attained, insufficient to their happiness, or they may not previously have known all the necessary means to obtain them: but they must not therefore complain, if they do not meet with success, which they have no reason to expect.

Parrhasius, in collecting the most admired excellencies from various models, to produce perfection, concluded from general principles that mankind would be pleased again with what had once excited their admiration. So far he was a philosopher: but he was disappointed of success; yes, for he was ignorant of the cause necessary to produce it. The separate features might be perfect, but they were unsuited to each other, and in their forced union he could not give to the whole countenance symmetry and an appropriate expression.

There was, as you say, a *something* wanting which his science had not taught him. He should then have set himself to examine what that *something* was, and how it was to be obtained. His want of success arose from the *insufficiency*, not the *fallacy*, of theory. Your object, dear Julia, we will suppose is "to please." If general observation and experience have taught you that slight accomplishments and a trivial character succeed more certainly in obtaining this end than higher worth and sense, you act from principle in rejecting the one and aiming at the other. You have discovered, or think you have discovered, the secret causes which produce the desired effect, and you employ them. Do not call this *instinct* or *nature;* this, also, though you scorn it, is *philosophy*.

But when you come soberly to reflect, you have a feeling in your mind that reason and cool judgment disapprove of the part you are acting.

Let us, however, distinguish between disapprobation of the *object*, and the means.

Averse as enthusiasm is to the retrograde motion of analysis, let me, my dear friend, lead you one step backward.

Why do you wish to please? I except at present from the question, the desire to please arising from a pas-

sion which requires a reciprocal return. Confined as *this* wish must be in a woman's heart to one object alone, when you say, Julia, *that the admiration of others* will be absolutely necessary to your happiness, I must suppose you mean to express only a *general* desire to please.

Then, under this limitation, let me ask you again, why do you wish to please?

Do not let a word stop you. The word *vanity* conveys to us a disagreeable idea. There seems something *selfish* in the sentiment—that all the pleasure we feel in pleasing others arises from the gratification it affords to our own *vanity*.

We refine and explain, and never can bring ourselves fairly to make a confession which we are sensible must lower us in the opinion of others, and consequently mortify the very *vanity* we would conceal. So strangely, then, do we deceive ourselves as to deny the existence of a motive which at the instant prompts the denial. But let us, dear Julia, exchange the word *vanity* for a less odious word, self-complacency; let us acknowledge that we wish to please, because the success raises our self-complacency. If you ask why raising our self-approbation gives us pleasure, I must answer that I do not know. Yet I see and feel that it does; I observe that the voice of numbers is capable of raising the highest transport, or the most fatal despair. The eye of man seems to possess a fascinating power over his fellow-creatures, to raise the blush of shame, or the glow of pride.

I look around me, and I see riches, titles, dignities, pursued with such eagerness by thousands, only as the signs of distinction. Nay, are not all these things sacrificed the moment they cease to be distinctions? The moment the prize of glory is to be won by other means, do not millions sacrifice their fortunes, their peace, their health, their lives, for *fame?* Then among the highest pleasures of human beings I must place self-approbation. With this belief, let us endeavour to secure it in the greatest extent, and to the longest duration.

Then, Julia, the wish to please becomes only a secondary motive, subordinate to the desire I have to secure my own self-complacency. We will examine how far they are connected.

In reflecting upon my own mind, I observe that I am flattered by the opinion of others in proportion to the

opinion I have previously formed of their judgment; or I perceive that the opinion of numbers, merely as numbers, has power to give me great pleasure or great pain. I would unite both these pleasures if I could, but in general I cannot—they are incompatible. The opinion of the vulgar crowd and the enlightened individual, the applause of the highest and the lowest of mankind, cannot be obtained by the same means.

Another question then arises,—whom shall we wish to please? We must choose, and be decided in the choice.

You say that you are proud; I am prouder. You will be content with indiscriminate admiration; nothing will content me but what is *select*. As long as I have the use of my reason—as long as my heart can feel the delightful sense of a "well-earned praise"—I will fix my eye on the highest pitch of excellence, and steadily endeavour to attain it.

Conscious of her worth, and daring to assert it, I would have a woman early in life know that she is capable of filling the heart of a man of sense and merit—that she is worthy to be his companion and friend. With all the energy of her soul, with all the powers of her understanding, I would have a woman endeavour to please those whom she esteems and loves.

She runs a risk, you will say, of never meeting her equal. Hearts and understandings of a superior order are seldom met with in the world; or, when met with, it may not be her particular good-fortune to win them. True; but if ever she *wins*, she will *keep* them; and the prize appears to me well worth the pains and difficulty of attaining.

I, Julia, admire and feel enthusiasm; but I would have philosophy directed to the highest objects. I dread apathy as much as you can; and I would endeavour to prevent it, not by sacrificing half my existence, but by enjoying the whole with moderation.

You ask why exercise does not increase sensibility, and why sympathy with imaginary distress will not also increase the disposition to sympathize with what is real? Because pity should, I think, always be associated with the active desire to relieve. If it be suffered to become a *passive sensation*, it is a *useless weakness*, not a virtue. The species of reading you speak of must be hurtful, even in this respect, to the mind; as it indulges all the

luxury of wo in sympathy with fictitious distress, without requiring the exertion which reality demands: besides, universal experience proves to us that habit, so far from increasing sensibility, absolutely destroys it, by familiarizing it with objects of compassion.

Let me, my dear friend, appeal even to your own experience in the very instance you mention. Is there any pathetic writer in the world who could move you as much at the "twentieth reading as at the first?"* Speak naturally, and at the third or fourth reading you would probably say, It is very pathetic, but I have read it before. I liked it better the first time; that is to say, it *did* touch me once—I know it *ought* to touch me now; but it *does not*. Beware of this! Do not let life become *as tedious as a twice-told tale.*

Farewell, dear Julia: this is the answer of fact against eloquence, philosophy against enthusiasm. You appeal from my understanding to my heart—I appeal from the heart to the understanding of my judge; and ten years hence the decision perhaps will be in my favour.

Yours sincerely,

CAROLINE.

LETTER III.

CAROLINE TO JULIA,

On her intended marriage.

INDEED, my dear Julia, I hardly know how to venture to give you my advice upon a subject which ought to depend so much upon your own taste and feelings. My opinion and my wishes I could readily tell you: the idea of seeing you united and attached to my brother is certainly the most agreeable to me; but I am to divest myself of the partiality of a sister, and to consider my brother and Lord V—— as equal candidates for your preference—equal, I mean, in your regard; for you say that "Your heart is not yet decided in its choice. If that oracle would declare itself in intelligible terms, you would not hesitate a moment to obey its dictates." But,

* Hume said that Parnell's poems were as fresh at the twentieth reading as at the first.

my dear Julia, is there not another, a *safer*, I do not say a *better*, oracle to be consulted—your reason? While the "doubtful beam still nods from side to side," you may with a steady hand weigh your own motives, and determine what things will be essential to your happiness, and what *price* you will pay for them; for

> "Each pleasure has its *price*: and they who pay
> Too much of pain but squander life away."

Do me the justice to believe that I do not quote these lines of Dryden as being the finest poetry he ever wrote; for poets, you know, as Waller wittily observed, never succeed so well in truth as in fiction.

Since we cannot in life expect to realize all our wishes, we must distinguish those which claim the rank of wants. We must separate the fanciful from the real, or at least make the one subservient to the other.

It is of the utmost importance to you, more particularly, to take every precaution before you decide for life, because disappointment and restraint afterward would be insupportable to your temper.

You have often declared to me, my dear friend, that your love of poetry, and of all the refinements of literary and romantic pursuits, is so intimately "interwoven in your mind, that nothing could separate them without destroying the whole fabric."

Your tastes, you say, are fixed. If they are so, you must be doubly careful to ensure their gratification. If you cannot make *them* subservient to external circumstances, you should certainly, if it be in your power, choose a situation in which circumstances will be subservient to them. If you are convinced that you could not adopt the tastes of another, it will be absolutely necessary for your happiness to live with one whose tastes are similar to your own.

The belief in that sympathy of souls which the poets suppose declares itself between two people at first sight is perhaps as absurd as the late fashionable belief in animal magnetism; but there is a sympathy which, if it be not the foundation, may be called the cement of affection. Two people could not, I should think, retain any lasting affection for each other without a mutual sympathy in taste, and in their diurnal occupations and domestic pleasures. This you will allow, my dear Julia, even in a fuller extent than I do. Now, my brother's

tastes, character, and habits of life are so very different from Lord V——'s, that I scarcely know how you can compare them; at least before you can decide which of the two would make you the happiest in life, you must determine what kind of life you may wish to lead; for my brother, though he might make you very happy in domestic life, would not make the Countess of V—— happy; nor would Lord V—— make Mrs. Percy happy. They must be two different women, with different habits and different wishes; so that you must divide yourself, my dear Julia, like Araspes, into two selves; I do not say into a bad and a good self; choose some other epithets to distinguish them, but distinct they must be: so let them now declare and decide their pretensions; and let the victor have not only the honours of a triumph, but all the prerogatives of victory. Let the subdued be subdued for life—let the victor take every precaution which policy can dictate to prevent the possibility of future contests with the vanquished.

But, without talking poetry to you, my dear friend, let me seriously recommend it to you to examine your own mind carefully; and if you find that public diversions and public admiration, dissipation, and all the pleasures of riches and high rank, are really and truly essential to your happiness, direct your choice accordingly. Marry Lord V——: he has a large fortune, extensive connexions, and an exalted station; his own taste for show and expense, his family pride and personal vanity, will all tend to the end you propose. Your house, table, equipages, may be all in the highest style of magnificence. Lord V——'s easiness of temper and fondness for you will readily give you that entire ascendency over his pleasures which your abilities give you over his understanding. He will not control your wishes; you may gratify them to the utmost bounds of his fortune, and perhaps beyond those bounds; you may have entire command at home and abroad. If these are your objects, Julia, take them; they are in your power. But remember, you must take them with their necessary concomitants—the restraints upon your time, upon the choice of your friends and your company, which high life imposes; the *ennui* subsequent to dissipation; the mortifications of rivalship in beauty, wit, rank, and magnificence; the trouble of managing a large fortune, and the chance of involving your affairs and your family in

difficulty and distress; these and a thousand more evils you must submit to. You must renounce all the pleasures of the heart and of the imagination; you must give up the idea of cultivating literary taste; you must not expect from your husband friendship and confidence, or any of the delicacies of affection. You govern him; he cannot therefore be your equal. You may be a fond mother, but you cannot educate your children; you will neither have the time nor the power to do it; you must trust them to a governess. In the selection of your friends, and in the enjoyment of their company and conversation, you will be still more restrained: in short, you must give up the pleasures of domestic life; for that is not in this case the life you have chosen. But you will exclaim against me for supposing you capable of making such a choice—such sacrifices!—I am sure, *next to my brother*, I am the last person in the world who would wish you to make them.

You have another choice, my dear Julia: domestic life is offered to you by one who has every wish and every power to make it agreeable to you; by one whose tastes resemble your own; who would be a judge and a fond admirer of all your perfections. You would have perpetual motives to cultivate every talent, and to exert every power of pleasing for his sake—for *his* sake, whose penetration no improvement would escape, and whose affection would be susceptible of every proof of yours. Am I drawing too flattering a picture?—A sister's hand may draw a partial likeness, but still it will be a likeness. At all events, my dear Julia, you would be certain of the mode of life you would lead with my brother. The regulation of your time and occupations would be your own. In the education of your family you would meet with no interruptions or restraint. You would have no governess to counteract, no strangers to intrude; you might follow your own judgment, or yield to the judgment of one who would never require you to submit to his opinion, but to his reasons.

All the pleasures of friendship you would enjoy in your own family in the highest perfection, and you would have for your sister the friend of your infancy,

CAROLINE.

LETTER IV.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——,

Upon her intended separation from her husband.

You need not fear, my dear Lady V——, that I should triumph in the accomplishment of my prophecies; or that I should reproach you for having preferred your own opinion to my advice. Believe me, my dear Julia, I am your friend, nor would the name of sister have increased my friendship.

Five years have made then so great a change in your feelings and views of life, that a few days ago, when my letter to you on your marriage accidentally fell into your hands, "*you were struck with a species of astonishment at your choice, and you burst into tears in an agony of despair, on reading the wretched doom foretold to the wife of Lord V——. A doom,*" you add, "*which I feel hourly accomplishing, and which I see no possibility of averting, but by a separation from a husband, with whom, I now think, it was madness to unite myself.*" Your opinion I must already know upon this subject, "*as the same arguments which should have prevented me from making such a choice, ought now to determine me to abjure it.*"

You say, dear Julia, that my letter struck you with despair. Despair is either madness or folly; it obtains, it deserves nothing from mankind but pity; and pity, though it be akin to love, has yet a secret affinity to contempt. In strong minds, despair is an acute disease; the prelude to great exertion. In weak minds, it is a chronic distemper, followed by incurable indolence. Let the crisis be favourable, and resume your wonted energy. Instead of suffering the imagination to dwell with unavailing sorrow on the past, let us turn our attention towards the future. When an evil is irremediable, let us acknowledge it to be such, and bear it: there is no power to which we submit so certainly as to necessity. With our hopes, our wishes cease. Imagination has a contracting, as well as an expansive faculty. The prisoner who, deprived of all that we conceive to constitute the pleasures of life, could interest or occupy himself with the labours of a spider, was certainly a

philosopher. He enjoyed all the means of happiness that were left in his power.

I know, my dear Lady V——, that words have little effect over grief; and I do not, I assure you, mean to insult you with the parade of stoic philosophy. But consider, your error is not perhaps so great as you imagine. Certainly, they who at the beginning of life can with a steady eye look through the long perspective of distant years, who can in one view comprise all the different objects of happiness and misery, who can compare accurately, and justly estimate their respective degrees of importance,—and who, after having formed such a calculation, are capable of acting uniformly, in consequence of their own conviction, are the *wisest*, and, as far as prudence can influence our fortune, the *happiest* of human beings. Next to this favoured class are those who can perceive and repair their own errors; who can stop at any given period, to take a new view of life. If unfortunate circumstances have denied you a place in the first rank, you may, dear Julia, secure yourself a station in the second. Is not the conduct of a woman, after her marriage, of infinitely more importance than her previous choice, whatever it may have been? Then now consider what yours should be.

You say that it is easier to *break* a chain than to *stretch* it; but remember that when broken, your part of the chain, Julia, will still remain with you, and fetter and disgrace you through life. Why should a woman be so circumspect in her choice? Is it not because when once made she must abide by it? "She sets her life upon the cast, and she must stand the hazard of the die." From domestic uneasiness a man has a thousand resources: in middling life, the tavern; in high life, the gaming-table, suspends the anxiety of thought. Dissipation, ambition, business, the occupation of a profession, change of place, change of company, afford him agreeable and varied relief from domestic chagrin. If his home become tiresome, he leaves it; if his wife become disagreeable to him, he leaves her, and in leaving her loses *only* a wife. But what resource has a woman?—Precluded from all the occupations common to the other sex, she loses even those peculiar to her own. She has no remedy, from the company of a man she dislikes, but a separation; and this remedy, desperate as it is, is allowed only to a certain class of women

in society; to those whose fortune affords them the means of subsistence, and whose friends have secured to them a separate maintenance. A peeress then probably can leave her husband if she wish it; a peasant's wife cannot; she depends upon the character and privileges of a wife for actual subsistence. Her domestic care, if not her affection, is secured to her husband; and it is just that it should. He sacrifices his liberty, his labour, his ingenuity, his time, for the support and protection of his wife; and in proportion to his protection is his power.

In higher life, where the sacrifices of both parties in the original union are more equal, the evils of a separation are more nearly balanced. But even here, the wife who has hazarded least suffers the most by the dissolution of the partnership; she loses a great part of her fortune, and of the conveniences and luxuries of life. She loses her home, her rank in society. She loses both the repellent and the attractive power of a mistress of a family. "Her occupation is gone." She becomes a wanderer. While her youth and beauty last, she may enjoy that species of delirium, caused by public admiration; fortunate if habit does not destroy the power of this charm, before the season of its duration expire. It was said to be the wish of a celebrated modern beauty, "that she might not survive her nine-and-twentieth birth-day." I have often heard this wish quoted for its extravagance; but I always admired it for its good sense. The lady foresaw the inevitable doom of her declining years. Her apprehensions for the future imbittered even her enjoyment of the present; and she had resolution enough to offer to take "a bond of fate," to sacrifice one half of her life, to secure the pleasure of the other.

But, dear Lady V——, probably this wish was made at some distance from the destined period of its accomplishment. On the eve of her nine-and-twentieth birth-day, the lady perhaps might have felt inclined to retract her prayer. At least we should provide for the cowardice which might seize the female mind at such an instant. Even the most wretched life has power to attach us; none can be more wretched than the old age of a dissipated beauty: unless, Lady V——, it be that of a woman, who to all her evils has the addition of remorse, for having abjured her duties and abandoned her family.

Such is the situation of a woman who separates from her husband. Reduced to go the same insipid round of public amusements, yet more restrained than an unmarried beauty in youth, yet more miserable in age, the superiority of her genius and the sensibility of her heart become her greatest evils. She, indeed, must pray for indifference. Avoided by all her family connexions, hated and despised where she might have been loved and respected, solitary in the midst of society, she feels herself deserted at the time of life when she most wants social comfort and assistance.

Dear Julia, while it is yet in your power secure to yourself a happier fate; retire to the bosom of your own family; prepare for yourself a new society; perform the duties, and you shall soon enjoy the pleasures, of domestic life; educate your children; while they are young it shall be your occupation; as they grow up it shall be your glory. Let me anticipate your future success, when they shall appear such as you can make them; when the world shall ask, "Who educated these amiable young women? Who formed their character? Who cultivated the talents of this promising young man? Why does this whole family live together in such perfect union?" With one voice, dear Julia, your children shall name their mother; she who in the bloom of youth checked herself in the career of dissipation, and turned all the ability and energy of her mind to their education.

Such will be your future fame. In the mean time, before you have formed for yourself companions in your own family, you will want a society suited to your taste. "Disgusted as you have been with frivolous company, you say that you wish to draw around you a society of literary and estimable friends, whose conversation and talents shall delight you, and who at the same time that they are excited to display their own abilities, shall be a judge of yours."

But, dear Lady V——, the possibility of your forming such a society must depend on your having a home to receive, a character and consequence in life to invite and attach friends. The opinion of numbers is necessary to excite the ambition of individuals. To be a female Mecænas, you must have power to confer favours, as well as judgment to discern merit.

What castles in the air are built by the synthetic

wand of imagination, which vanish when exposed to the analysis of reason!

Then, Julia, supposing that Lord V——, as your husband, becomes a negative quantity as to your happiness, yet he will acquire another species of value as the master of your family and the father of your children; as a person who supports your public consequence, and your private self-complacency. Yes, dear Lady V——, he will increase your self-complacency; for do you not think, that when your husband sees his children prosper under your care, his family united under your management—while he feels your merit at home, and hears your praises abroad, do you not think he will himself learn to respect and love you? You say that "*he is not a judge of female excellence; that he has no real taste; that vanity is his ruling passion.*" Then if his judgment be dependent on the opinions of others, he will be the more easily led by the public voice, and you will command the suffrages of the public. If he has not taste enough to approve, he will have vanity enough to be proud of you; and a vain man insensibly begins to love that of which he is proud. Why does Lord V—— love his buildings, his paintings, his equipages? It is not for their intrinsic value; but because they are means of distinction to him. Let his wife become a greater distinction to him, and on the same principles he will prefer her. Set an example, then, dear Lady V——, of domestic virtue; your talents shall make it admired, your rank shall make it conspicuous. You are ambitious, Julia, you love praise; you have been used to it; you cannot live happily without it.

Praise is a mental luxury, which becomes from habit absolutely necessary to our existence; and in purchasing it we must pay the price set upon it by society. The more curious, the more avaricious we become of this "aerial coin," the more it is our interest to preserve its currency and increase its value. You, my dear Julia, in particular, who have amassed so much of it, should not cry down its price, for your own sake!—Do not then say, in a fit of disgust, that "you are grown too wise now to value applause."

If, during youth, your appetite for applause was indiscriminate, and indulged to excess, you are now more difficult in your choice, and are become an *epicure* in your *taste* for praise.

Adieu, my dear Julia; I hope still to see you as happy in domestic life as

Your ever affectionate
And sincere friend,
CAROLINE.

LETTER V.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——,

On her conduct after her separation from her husband.

A DELICACY, of which I now begin to repent, has of late prevented me from writing to you. I am afraid I shall be abrupt, but it is necessary to be explicit. Your conduct, ever since your separation from your husband, has been anxiously watched from a variety of motives, by his family and your own: it has been blamed. Reflect upon your own mind, and examine with what justice.

Last summer, when I was with you, I observed a change in your conversation, and the whole turn of your thoughts. I perceived an unusual impatience of restraint; a confusion in your ideas when you began to reason,—an eloquence in your language when you began to declaim, which convinced me that from some secret cause the powers of your reason had been declining, and those of your imagination rapidly increasing; the boundaries of right and wrong seemed to be no longer marked in your mind. Neither the rational hope of happiness nor a sense of duty governed you; but some unknown, wayward power seemed to have taken possession of your understanding, and to have thrown every thing into confusion. You appeared peculiarly averse to philosophy: let me recall your own words to you; you asked "of what use philosophy could be to beings who had no free-will, and how the ideas of just punishment and involuntary crime could be reconciled?"

Your understanding involved itself in metaphysical absurdity. In conversing upon literary subjects one evening, in speaking of the striking difference between the conduct and the understanding of the great Lord Bacon, you said, that "it by no means surprised you; that to an enlarged mind, accustomed to consider the universe as one vast *whole*, the conduct of that little animated atom, that inconsiderable part *self*, must be too

insignificant to fix or merit attention. It was nothing," you said, "in the general mass of vice and virtue, happiness and misery." I believe I answered, "that it might be *nothing* compared to the great *whole*, but it was *every thing* to the individual." Such were your opinions in theory; you must know enough of the human heart to perceive their tendency when reduced to practice. Speculative opinions, I know, have little influence over the practice of those who *act* much and think little; but I should conceive their power to be considerable over the conduct of those who have much time for reflection and little necessity for action. In one case the habit of action governs the thoughts upon any sudden emergency; in the other, the thoughts govern the actions. The truth or falsehood then of speculative opinions is of much greater consequence to our sex than to the other; as we live a life of reflection, they of action.

Retrace, then, dear Julia, in your mind the course of your thoughts for some time past; discover the cause of this revolution in your opinions; judge yourself; and remember, that in the *mind* as well as in the body, the highest pitch of disease is often attended with an unconsciousness of its existence. If, then, Lady V——, upon receiving my letter, you should feel averse to this self-examination, or if you should imagine it to be useless, I no longer advise, I command you to quit your present abode; come to me: fly from the danger, and be safe.

Dear Julia, I must assume this peremptory tone: if you are angry, I must disregard your anger; it is the anger of disease, the anger of one who is roused from that sleep which would end in death.

I respect the equality of friendship; but this equality permits, nay requires, the temporary ascendency I assume. In real friendship, the judgment, the genius, the prudence of each party become the common property of both. Even if they are equals, they may not be so *always*. Those transient fits of passion to which the best and wisest are liable may deprive even the superior of the advantage of their reason. She then has still in her friend an *impartial*, though perhaps an inferior, judgment; each becomes the guardian of the other, as their mutual safety may require.

Heaven seems to have granted this double chance of virtue and happiness, as the peculiar reward of friendship.

Use it, then, my dear friend; accept the assistance you could so well return. Obey me; I shall judge of you by your resolution at this crisis; on it depends your fate, and my friendship.

Your sincere
and affectionate
CAROLINE.

LETTER VI.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——,

Just before she went to France.

THE time is now come, Lady V——, when I must bid you an eternal adieu. With what deep regret, I need not, Julia, I cannot tell you.

I burnt your letter the moment I had read it. Your past confidence I never will betray; but I must renounce all future intercourse with you. I am a sister, a wife, a mother; all these connexions forbid me to be longer your friend. In misfortune, in sickness, or in poverty, I never would have forsaken you; but infamy I cannot share. I would have gone, I went, to the brink of the precipice to save you; with all my force I held you back: but in vain. But why do I vindicate my conduct to you now? Accustomed as I have always been to think your approbation necessary to my happiness, I forgot that henceforward your opinion is to be nothing to me, or mine to you.

O Julia, the idea, the certainty, that you must, if you live, be in a few years, in a few months perhaps, reduced to absolute want, in a foreign country—without a friend—a protector, the fate of women who have fallen from a state as high as yours, the names of L——, of G——, the horror I feel at joining your name to theirs, impels me to make one more attempt to save you.

Companion of my earliest years! friend of my youth! my beloved Julia! by the happy innocent hours we have spent together, by the love you had for me, by the respect you bear to the memory of your mother, by the agony with which your father will hear of the loss of his daughter, by all that has power to touch your mind—I conjure you, I implore you to pause!—Farewell!

CAROLINE.

LETTER VII.

CAROLINE TO LORD V——,

Written a few months after the date of the preceding letter.

My Lord,

Though I am too sensible that all connexion between my unfortunate friend and her family must for some time have been dissolved, I venture now to address myself to your lordship.

On Wednesday last, about half after six o'clock in the evening, the following note was brought to me. It had been written with such a trembling hand that it was scarcely legible; but I knew the writing too well.

"If you ever loved me, Caroline, read this—do not tear it the moment you see the name of Julia: she has suffered—she is humbled. I left France with the hope of seeing you once more; but, now I am so near you, my courage fails, and my heart sinks within me. I have no friend upon earth—I deserve none; yet I cannot help wishing to see once more before I die the friend of my youth, to thank her with my last breath.

"But, dear Caroline, if I must not see you, write to me, if possible, one line of consolation.

"Tell me, is my father living?—do you know any thing of my children?—I dare not ask for my husband. Adieu! I am so weak that I can scarcely write—I hope I shall soon be no more. Farewell! Julia."

I immediately determined to follow the bearer of this letter. Julia was waiting for my answer at a small inn, in a neighbouring village, at a few miles' distance. It was night when I got there: every thing was silent—all the houses were shut up, excepting one, in which we saw two or three lights glimmering through the window—this was the inn: as your lordship may imagine, it was a very miserable place. The mistress of the house seemed to be touched with pity for the stranger: she opened the door of a small room, where she said the poor lady was resting; and retired as I entered.

Upon a low matted seat beside the fire sat Lady V——; she was in black; her knees were crossed, and her white

but emaciated arms flung on one side over her lap; her hands were clasped together, and her eyes fixed upon the fire: she seemed neither to hear nor see any thing round her, but, totally absorbed in her own reflections, to have sunk into insensibility. I dreaded to rouse her from this state of torpor; and I believe I stood for some moments motionless: at last I moved softly towards her—she turned her head—started up—a scarlet blush overspread her face—she grew livid again instantly, gave a faint shriek, and sank senseless into my arms.

When she returned to herself, and found her head lying upon my shoulder, and heard my voice soothing her with all the expressions of kindness I could think of, she smiled with a look of gratitude, which I never shall forget. Like one who had been long unused to kindness, she seemed ready to pour forth all the fondness of her heart: but, as if recollecting herself better, she immediately checked her feelings—withdrew her hand from mine—thanked me—said she was quite well again—cast down her eyes, and her manner changed from tenderness to timidity. She seemed to think that she had lost all right to sympathy, and received even the common offices of humanity with surprise: her high spirit, I saw, was quite broken.

I think I never felt such sorrow as I did in contemplating Julia at this instant: she who stood before me, sinking under the sense of inferiority, I knew to be my equal—my superior; yet by fatal imprudence, by one rash step, all her great, and good, and amiable qualities were irretrievably lost to the world and to herself.

When I thought that she was a little recovered, I begged of her, if she was not too much fatigued, to let me carry her home. At these words she looked at me with surprise. Her eyes filled with tears; but without making any other reply, she suffered me to draw her arm within mine, and attempted to follow me. I did not know how feeble she was till she began to walk; it was with the utmost difficulty I supported her to the door; and by the assistance of the people of the house she was lifted into the carriage: we went very slowly. When the carriage stopped, she was seized with a universal tremor; she started when the man knocked at the door, and seemed to dread its being opened. The appearance of light and the sound of cheerful voices struck her with horror.

I could not myself help being shocked with the contrast between the dreadful situation of my friend and the happiness of the family to which I was returning.

"Oh!" said she, "what are these voices?—Whither are you taking me?—For heaven's sake do not let anybody see me!"

I assured her that she should go directly to her own apartment, and that no human being should approach her without her express permission.

Alas! it happened at this very moment that all my children came running with the utmost gayety into the hall to meet us, and the very circumstance which I had been so anxious to prevent happened—little Julia was among them. The gayety of the children suddenly ceased the moment they saw Lady V—— coming up the steps—they were struck with her melancholy air and countenance: she, leaning upon my arm, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, let me lead her in, and sank upon the first chair she came to. I made a sign to the children to retire; but the moment they began to move, Lady V—— looked up—saw her daughter—and now for the first time burst into tears. The little girl did not recollect her poor mother till she heard the sound of her voice; and then she threw her arms round her neck, crying, "Is it you, mamma?"—and all the children immediately crowded round and asked, "if this was the same Lady V—— who used to play with them."

It is impossible to describe the effect these simple questions had on Julia: a variety of emotions seemed struggling in her countenance; she rose and made an attempt to break from the children, but could not—she had not strength to support herself. We carried her away, and put her to bed; she took no notice of anybody, nor did she even seem to know that I was with her: I thought she was insensible, but as I drew the curtains I heard her give a deep sigh.

I left her, and carried away her little girl, who had followed us up stairs and begged to stay with her mother; but I was apprehensive that the sight of her might renew her agitation.

After I was gone, they told me that she was perfectly still, with her eyes closed; and I staid away some time, in hopes that she might sleep: however, about midnight she sent to beg to speak to me: she was very ill—she beckoned to me to sit down by her bedside—every one left the room; and when Julia saw herself

alone with me, she took my hand, and in a low but calm voice she said, "I have not many hours to live—my heart is broken—I wished to see you, to thank you while it was yet in my power." She pressed my hand to her trembling lips: "Your kindness," added she, "touches me more than all the rest; but how ashamed you must be of such a friend! Oh Caroline! to die a disgrace to all who ever loved me!"

The tears trickled down her face, and choked her utterance: she wiped them away hastily. "But it is not now a time," said she, "to think of myself—can I see my daughter?" The little girl was asleep: she was awakened, and I brought her to her mother. Julia raised herself in her bed, and summoning up all her strength, "My dearest friend!" said she, putting her child's hand into mine, "when I am gone, be a mother to this child —let her know my whole history, let nothing be concealed from her. Poor girl! you will live to blush at your mother's name." She paused, and leaned back: I was going to take the child away, but she held out her arms again for her, and kissed her several times. "Farewell," said she; "I shall never see you again." The little girl burst into tears. Julia wished to say something more—she raised herself again—at last she uttered these words with energy:—"My love, *be good and happy;*" she then sank down on the pillow quite exhausted—she never spoke afterward: I took her hand —it was cold—her pulse scarcely beat—her eyes rolled without meaning—in a few moments she expired.

Painful as it has been to me to recall the circumstances of her death to my imagination, I have given your lordship this exact and detailed account of my unfortunate friend's behaviour in her last moments. Whatever may have been her errors, her soul never became callous from vice. The sense of her own ill conduct was undoubtedly the immediate cause of her illness, and the remorse which had long preyed upon her mind at length brought her to the grave— * * *

* * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * *

I have the honour to be,
My lord, &c.
CAROLINE.

Written in 1787.
Published in 1795

Harper's Stereotype Edition.

TALES AND NOVELS

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

EIGHTEEN VOLUMES BOUND IN NINE.

VOL. XIV.

CONTAINING

PATRONAGE

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. & J. HARPER,
NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.
AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT
THE UNITED STATES.

1834.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
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TO THE READER.

Mr daughter again applies to me for my paternal *imprimatur*; and I hope that I am not swayed by partiality when I give the sanction which she requires.

To excite the rising generation to depend upon their own exertions for success in life is surely a laudable endeavour; but, while the young mind is cautioned against dependence on the patronage of the great, and of office, it is encouraged to rely upon such friends as may be acquired by personal merit, good manners, and good conduct.

RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH.

Edgeworth's-town,
October 6, 1813.

PREFACE

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

THE public has called for a third *impression* of this book; it was, therefore, the duty of the author to take advantage of the corrections which have been communicated to her by private friends and public censors. Whatever she has thought liable to just censure has in the present edition been amended, as far as is consistent with the identity of the story. It is remarkable that several incidents which have been objected to as impossible or improbable were true. For instance, the medical case, in chapter xix.

A bishop was really saved from suffocation by a clergyman in his diocess (no matter where or when), in the manner represented in chapter x. The bishop died long ago; and he never was an epicure. A considerable estate was about seventy years ago regained, as described in chapter xlii., by the discovery of a sixpence under the seal of a deed, which had been coined later than the date of the deed. Whether it be advantageous or prudent to introduce such singular facts in a fictitious history is a separate consideration, which might lead to a discussion too long for the present occasion.

On some other points of more importance to the writer, it is necessary here to add a few words. It has been supposed that some parts of PATRONAGE were not written by Miss Edgeworth. This is not fact: the

whole of these volumes were written by her, the opinions they contain are her own, and she is answerable for all the faults which may be found in them. Of ignorance of law, and medicine, and of diplomacy she pleads guilty; and of making any vain or absurd pretensions to legal or medical learning, she hopes, by candid judges, to be acquitted. If in the letters and history of her lawyer and physician she has sometimes introduced technical phrases, it was done merely to give, as far as she could, the colour of reality to her fictitious personages. To fulfil the main purpose of her story, it was essential only to show how some lawyers and physicians may be pushed forward for a time, without much knowledge either of law or medicine; or how, on the contrary, others may, independently of patronage, advance themselves permanently by their own merit. If this principal object of the fiction be accomplished, the author's ignorance on professional subjects is of little consequence to the moral or interest of the tale.

As to the charge of having drawn satirical portraits, she has already disclaimed all personality, and all intention of satirizing any profession; and she is grieved to find it necessary to repel such a charge. The author of a slight work of fiction may, however, be consoled for any unjust imputation of personal satire, by reflecting, that even the grave and impartial historian cannot always escape similar suspicion. Tacitus says that "there must always be men who, from congenial manners, and sympathy in vice, will think the fidelity of history a satire on themselves; and even the praise due to virtue is sure to give umbrage."

August 1, 1815.

PATRONAGE.

CHAPTER I.

"How the wind is rising!" said Rosamond.—"God help the poor people at sea to-night!"

Her brother Godfrey smiled.—"One would think,' said he, "that she had an argosy of lovers at sea unensured."

"You gentlemen," replied Rosamond, "imagine that ladies are always thinking of lovers."

"Not *always*," said Godfrey; "only when they show themselves particularly disposed to humanity."

"My humanity, on the present occasion, cannot even be suspected," said Rosamond; "for you know, alas! that I have no lover at sea or land."

"But a shipwreck might bless the lucky shore with some rich waif," said Godfrey.

"Waifs and strays belong to the lady of the manor," said Rosamond; "and I have no claim to them."

"My mother would, I dare say, make over her right to you," said Godfrey.

"But that would do me no good," said Rosamond; "for here is Caroline, with superior claims of every sort, and with that most undisputed of all the rights of woman—beauty."

"True: but Caroline would never accept of stray hearts," said Godfrey. "See how her lip curls with pride at the bare imagination!"

"Pride never curled Caroline's lip," cried Rosamond: "besides, pride is very becoming to a woman. No woman can be good for much without it, can she, mother?"

"Before you fly off, Rosamond, to my mother as to an ally, whom you are sure I cannot resist," said Godfrey, "settle first whether you mean to defend Caroline upon the ground of her having or not having pride,"

A fresh gust of wind rose at this moment, and Rosamond listened to it anxiously.

"Seriously, Godfrey," said she, "do you remember the shipwrecks last winter?"

As she spoke, Rosamond went to one of the windows, and opened the shutter. Her sister Caroline followed, and they looked out in silence.

"I see a light to the left of the beacon," said Caroline.—"I never saw a light there before—What can it mean?"

"Only some fishermen," said Godfrey.

"But, brother, it is quite a storm," persisted Rosamond.

"Only equinoctial gales, my dear."

"Only equinoctial gales! But to drowning people it would be no comfort that they were shipwrecked only by equinoctial gales. There! there! what do you think of that blast?" cried Rosamond; "is not there some danger now?"

"Godfrey will not allow it," said Mrs. Percy: "he is a soldier, and it is his trade not to know fear."

"Show him a *certain* danger," cried Mr. Percy, looking up from a letter he was writing,—"show him a *certain* danger, and he will feel fear as much as the greatest coward of you all.—Ha! upon my word, it is an *ugly* night," continued he, going to the window.

"Oh, my dear father!" cried Rosamond, "did you see that light—out at sea?—There! there!—to the left."

"To the east—I see it."

"Hark! did you hear?"

"Minute guns!" said Caroline.

There was a dead silence instantly.—Everybody listened.—Guns were heard again.—The signal of some vessel in distress. The sound seemed near the shore. Mr. Percy and Godfrey hastened immediately to the coast. Their servants and some people from the neighbouring village, whom they summoned, quickly followed. They found that a vessel had struck upon a rock, and from the redoubled signals, it appeared that the danger must be imminent.

The boatmen, who were just wakened, were surly, and swore that they would not stir; that whoever she was, she might weather out the night, for that, till daybreak, they couldn't get alongside of her. Godfrey instantly jumped into a boat, declaring he would go out

directly at all hazards. Mr. Percy, with as much intrepidity, but, as became his age, with more prudence, provided whatever assistance was necessary from the villagers, who declared they would go anywhere with him; the boatmen, then ashamed, or afraid of losing the offered reward, pushed aside the *land lubbers*, and were ready to put out to sea.

Out they rowed—and they were soon so near the vessel that they could hear the cries and voices of the crew. The boats hailed her, and she answered that she was Dutch, homeward bound—had mistaken the lights upon the coast—had struck on a rock—was filling with water—and must go down in half an hour.

The moment the boats came alongside of her, the crew crowded into them so fast, and with such disorder and precipitation, that they were in great danger of being overset, which Mr. Percy seeing, called out in a loud and commanding voice to stop several who were in the act of coming down the ship's side, and promised to return for them if they would wait. But just as he gave the order for his boatmen to *push off*, a French voice called out "Monsieur!—Monsieur l'Anglois!—one moment."

Mr. Percy looked back and saw, as the moon shone full upon the wreck, a figure standing at the poop, leaning over with outstretched arms.

"I am Monsieur de Tourville, monsieur—a chargé d'affaires—with papers of the greatest importance—despatches."

"I will return for you, sir—it is impossible for me to take you now—our boat is loaded as much as it can bear," cried Mr. Percy; and he repeated his order to the boatmen to *push off*.

While Godfrey and Mr. Percy were trimming the boat, M. de Tourville made an effort to jump into it.

"Oh! don't do it, sir!" cried a woman with a child in her arms; "the gentleman will come back for us: for God's sake, don't jump into it!"

"Don't attempt it, sir," cried Mr. Percy, looking up, "or you'll sink us all."

M. de Tourville threw down the poor woman who tried to stop him, and he leaped from the side of the ship. At the same moment Mr. Percy, seizing an oar, pushed the boat off, and saved it from being overset, as it must have been if M. de Tourville had scrambled into

it. He fell into the water. Mr. Percy, without waiting to see the event, went off as fast as possible, justly considering that the lives of the number he had under his protection, including his son's and his own, were not to be sacrificed for one man, whatever his name or office might be, especially when that man had persisted against all warning in his rash selfishness.

At imminent danger to themselves, Mr. Percy and Godfrey, after landing those in the boat, returned once more to the wreck; and though they both declared that their consciences would be at ease even if they found that M. de Tourville was drowned, yet it was evident that they rejoiced to see him safe on board. This time the boat held him and all the rest of his fellow-sufferers; and Mr. Percy and his son had the satisfaction of bringing every soul safely to shore. M. de Tourville, as soon as he found himself on terra firma, joined with all around him in warm thanks to Mr. Percy and his son, by whom their lives had been saved. Godfrey undertook to find lodgings for some of the passengers and for the ship's crew in the village, and Mr. Percy invited the captain, M. de Tourville, and the rest of the passengers, to Percy-hall, where Mrs. Percy and her daughters had prepared every thing for their hospitable reception. When they had warmed, dried, and refreshed themselves, they were left to enjoy what they wanted most —repose. The Percy family, nearly as much fatigued as their guests, were also glad to rest—all but Rosamond, who was wide awake, and so much excited by what had happened that she continued talking to her sister, who slept in the same room with her, of every circumstance, and telling her imaginations of all that might come to pass from the adventures of the night, while Caroline, too sleepy to be able to answer judiciously, or even plausibly, said, "Yes," "No," and "Very true," in the wrong place; and at length, incapable of uttering even a monosyllable, was reduced to inarticulate sounds in sign of attention. These grew fainter and fainter, and after long intervals absolutely failing, Rosamond with some surprise and indignation exclaimed, "I do believe, Caroline, you are asleep!" And in despair, Rosamond, for want of an auditor, was compelled to compose herself to rest.

In the course of a few hours the storm abated, and in the morning, when the family and their shipwrecked

guests assembled at breakfast, all was calm and serene. Much to Rosamond's dissatisfaction, M. de Tourville did not make his appearance. Of the other strangers she had seen only a glimpse the preceding night, and had not settled her curiosity concerning what sort of beings they were. On a clear view by daylight of the personages who now sat at the breakfast-table, there did not appear much to interest her romantic imagination, or to excite her benevolent sympathy. They had the appearance of careful money-making men, thick, square-built Dutch merchants, who said little and ate much—butter especially. With one accord, as soon as they had breakfasted, they arose, and begged permission to go down to the wreck to look after their property. Mr. Percy and Godfrey offered immediately to accompany them to the coast.

Mr. Percy had taken the precaution to set guards to watch all night, from the time he left the vessel, that no depredations might be committed. They found that some of the cargo had been damaged by the sea-water; but excepting this loss, there was no other of any consequence; the best part of the goods was perfectly safe. As it was found that it would take some time to repair the wreck, the Prussian and Hamburgh passengers determined to go on board a vessel which was to sail from a neighbouring port with the first fair wind. They came, previously to their departure, to thank the Percy family, and to assure them that their hospitality would never be forgotten. Mr. Percy pressed them to stay at Percy-hall till the vessel should sail, and till the captain should send notice of the first change of wind. This offer, however, was declined, and the Dutch merchants, with due acknowledgments, said, by their speaking partner, that "they considered it safest and best to go with the goods, and so wished Mr. Percy a good morning, and that he might prosper in all his dealings; and, sir," concluded he, "in any of the changes of fortune which happen to men by land as well as by sea, please to remember the names of Grinderweld, Groensvelt, and Slidderchild of Amsterdam, or our correspondents, Panton and Co., London."

So having said, they walked away, keeping an eye upon the goods.

When Mr. Percy returned home it was near dinner-time, yet M. de Tourville had not made his appearance.

He was all this while indulging in a comfortable sleep. He had no goods on board the wreck except his clothes, and as these were in certain trunks and portmanteaus in which Comtois, his valet, had a joint concern, M. de Tourville securely trusted that they would be obtained without his taking any trouble.

Comtois and the trunks again appeared, and a few minutes before dinner M. de Tourville made his entrance into the drawing-room, no longer in the plight of a shipwrecked mariner, but in gallant trim, wafting gales of momentary bliss as he went round the room paying his compliments to the ladies, bowing, smiling, apologizing, —the very pink of courtesy! The gentlemen of the family, who had seen him the preceding night in his frightened, angry, drenched, and miserable state, could scarcely believe him to be the same person.

A Frenchman, it will be allowed, can contrive to say more, and to tell more of his private history in a given time, than could be accomplished by a person of any other nation. In the few minutes before dinner he found means to inform the company that he was private secretary and favourite of the minister of a certain German court. To account for his having taken his passage in a Dutch merchant vessel, and for his appearing without a suitable suite, he whispered that he had been instructed to preserve a strict incognito, from which, indeed, nothing but the horrors of the preceding night could have drawn him.

Dinner was served, and at dinner M. de Tourville was seen, according to the polished forms of society, humbling himself in all the hypocrisy of politeness; with ascetic good-breeding preferring every creature's ease and convenience to his own, practising a continual system of self-denial, such as almost implied a total annihilation of self-interest and self-love. All this was strikingly contrasted with the selfishness which he had recently betrayed, when he was in personal danger. Yet the influence of polite manners prevailed so far as to make his former conduct be forgotten by most of the family.

After dinner, when the ladies retired, in the female privy council held to discuss the merits of the absent gentlemen, Rosamond spoke first, and during the course of five minutes pronounced as many contradictory opinions of M. de Tourville as could well be enunciated in

the same space of time. At last she paused, and her mother smiled.

"I understand your smile, mother," said Rosamond; "but the reason I appear a *little* to contradict myself sometimes in my judgment of character is, because I speak my thoughts just as they rise in my mind; while persons who have a character for judgment to support always keep the changes of their opinion snug to themselves, never showing the items of the account on either side, and let you see nothing but their balance. This is very grand, and, if their balance be right, very glorious. But ignominious as my mode of proceeding may seem, exposing me to the rebukes, derision, uplifted hands and eyes of my auditors, yet exactly because I am checked at every little mistake I make in my accounts, the chance is in my favour that my totals should at last be right, and my balance perfectly accurate."

"Very true, my dear: as long as you choose for your auditors only your friends, you are wise; but you sometimes lay your accounts open to strangers; and as they see only your errors, without ever coming to your conclusion, they form no favourable opinion of your accuracy."

"I don't mind what strangers think of me—much," said Rosamond. "At least you will allow, mamma, that I have reason to be satisfied, if only those who do not know me could form an unfavourable opinion of my judgment—and, after all, ma'am, of the two classes of people, those who 'never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one,' and those who never did a foolish thing, and never said a wise one,' would not you rather that I should belong to the latter class?"

"Certainly, if I were reduced to the cruel alternative; but is there an unavoidable necessity for your belonging to either class?"

"I will consider of it, ma'am," said Rosamond: "in the mean time, Caroline, you will allow that M. de Tourville is very agreeable?"

"Agreeable!" repeated Caroline; "such a selfish being! Have you forgotten his attempting to jump into the boat, at the hazard of oversetting it, and of drowning my father and Godfrey, who went out to save him—and when my father warned him—and promised to return for him—selfish, cowardly creature!"

"Oh! poor man, he was so frightened that he did not know what he was doing—he was not himself."

"You mean he was himself," said Caroline.

"You are very ungrateful, Caroline," cried Rosamond; "for I am sure M. de Tourville admires you extremely—yes, in spite of that provoking, incredulous smile, I say he does admire you exceedingly."

"And if he did," replied Caroline, "that would make no difference in my opinion of him."

"I doubt *that*," said Rosamond: "I know a person's admiring me would make a great difference in my opinion of his taste and judgment—and how much more if he had sense enough to admire you!"

Rosamond paused, and stood for some minutes silent in revery.

"It will never do, my dear," said Mrs. Percy, looking up at her; "trust me, it will never do; turn him which way you will in your imagination, you will never make a hero of him—nor yet a brother-in-law."

"My dear mother, how could you guess what I was thinking of!" said Rosamond, colouring a little, and laughing: "but I assure you—now let me explain to you, ma'am, in one word, what I think of M. de Tourville."

"Hush! my dear, he is here."

The gentlemen came into the room to tea. M. de Tourville walked to the table at which Mrs. Percy was sitting; and, after various compliments on the beauty of the views from the windows, on the richness of the foliage in the park, and the superiority of English verdure, he next turned to look at the pictures in the saloon, distinguished a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, then passing to a table on which lay several books—"Is it permitted!" said he, taking up one of them—the Life of Lord Nelson.

M. de Tourville did not miss the opportunity of paying a just, and what to English ears he knew must be a delightful, tribute of praise to our naval hero. Then opening several other books, he made a rash attempt to pronounce in English their titles, and with the happy facility of a Frenchman, he touched upon various subjects, dwelt upon none, but found means on all to say something to raise himself and his country in the opinion of the company, and at the same time to make all his auditors pleased with themselves. Presently, taking

a seat between Rosamond and Caroline, he applied himself to draw out their talents for conversation. Nor did he labour in vain. They did not shut themselves up in stupid and provoking silence, nor did they make any ostentatious display of their knowledge or abilities. M. de Tourville, as Rosamond had justly observed, seemed to be particularly struck with Miss Caroline Percy She was beautiful, and of an uncommon style of beauty. Ingenuous, unaffected, and with all the simplicity of youth, there was a certain dignity and graceful self-possession in her manner, which gave the idea of a superior character. She had, perhaps, less of what the French call *esprit* than M. de Tourville had been accustomed to meet with in young persons on the Continent, but he was the more surprised by the strength and justness of thought which appeared in her plain replies to the *finesse* of some of his questions.

The morning of the second day that he was at Percy-hall, M. de Tourville was admiring the Miss Percy's drawings, especially some miniatures of Caroline's, and he produced his snuff-box, to show Mr. Percy a beautiful miniature on its lid.

It was exquisitely painted. M. de Tourville offered it to Caroline to copy, and Mrs. Percy urged her to make the attempt.

"It is the celebrated Euphrosyne," said he, "who, from the stage, was very near mounting a throne."

M. de Tourville left the miniature in the hands of the ladies to be admired, and, addressing himself to Mr. Percy, began to tell with much mystery the story of Euphrosyne. She was an actress of whom the prince, heir-apparent at the *German court* where he resided, had become violently enamoured. One of the prince's young confidants had assisted his royal highness in carrying on a secret correspondence with Euphrosyne, which she managed so artfully, that the prince was on the point of giving her a written promise of marriage, when the intrigue was discovered, and prevented from proceeding further, by a certain Count Albert Altenberg, a young nobleman who had till that moment been one of the prince's favourites, but who, by thus opposing his passion, lost entirely his prince's favour. The story was a common story of an intrigue, such as happens every day in every country where there is a young

prince; but there was something uncommon in the conduct of Count Altenberg. Mr. Percy expressed his admiration of it; but M. de Tourville, though he acknowledged, as in morality bound, that the count's conduct had been admirable, just what it ought to be upon this occasion, yet spoke of him altogether as *une tête exaltée*, a young man of a romantic Quixotic enthusiasm, to which he had sacrificed the interests of his family, and his own hopes of advancement at court. In support of this opinion, M. de Tourville related several anecdotes, and on each of these anecdotes Mr. Percy and M. de Tourville differed in opinion. All that was produced to prove that the young count had no judgment or discretion appeared to Mr. Percy proofs of his independence of character and greatness of soul. Mr. Percy repeated the anecdotes to Mrs. Percy and his daughters; and M. de Tourville, as soon as he saw that the ladies, and especially Caroline, differed from him, immediately endeavoured to slide round to their opinion, and assured Caroline, with many asseverations, and with his hand upon his heart, that he had merely been speaking of the light in which these things appeared to the generality of men of the world; that for his own particular feelings they were all in favour of the frankness and generosity of character evinced by these imprudences—he only lamented that certain qualities should expose their possessor to the censure and ridicule of those who were, like half the world, incapable of being moved by any motive but interest, and unable to reach to the idea of the moral sublime.

The more M. de Tourville said upon the subject, and the more gesture and emphasis he used to impress the belief in his truth, the less Caroline believed him, and the more dislike and contempt she felt for the duplicity and pitiful meanness of a character, which was always endeavouring to seem, instead of to be. He understood and felt the expression of her countenance; and, mortified by that dignified silence, which said more than words could express, he turned away, and never afterward addressed to her any of his *confidential* conversation.

From this moment Rosamond's opinion of M. de Tourville changed. She gave him up altogether, and denied, or at least gave him grudgingly, that praise which he eminently deserved for agreeable manners and conversational talents. Not a foible of his now

escaped her quick observation and her lively perception of ridicule.

Whether from accident or from some suspicion that he had lost ground with the ladies, M. de Tourville the next day directed the principal part of his conversation to the gentlemen of the family: comforting himself with the importance of his political and official character, he talked grandly of politics and diplomacy. Rosamond, who listened with an air of arch attention, from time to time, with a tone of ironical simplicity, asked explanations on certain points relative to the diplomatic code of morality, and professed herself much edified and enlightened by the answers she received.

She wished, as she told Caroline, that some one would write Advice to Diplomatists, in the manner of Swift's Advice to Servants; and she observed that M. de Tourville, chargé d'affaires, &c., might supply anecdotes illustrative, and might embellish the work with a portrait of a finished diplomatist. Unfortunately for the public, on the third morning of the diplomatist's visit, a circumstance occurred, which prevented the further development of his character, stopped his flow of anecdote, and snatched him from the company of his hospitable hosts. In looking over his papers, in order to show Mr. Percy a complimentary letter from some crowned head, M. de Tourville discovered that an important packet of papers belonging to his despatches was missing. He had in the moment of danger and terror stuffed all his despatches into his great-coat pocket, in getting out of the boat he had given his coat to Comtois to carry, and, strange to tell, this chargé d'affaires had taken it upon trust, from the assertion of his valet, that all his papers were safe. He once, indeed, had looked them over, but so carelessly that he never had missed the packet. His dismay was great when he discovered his loss. He repeated at least a thousand times that he was an undone man, unless the packet could be found. Search was made for it, in the boat, on the shore, in every probable and improbable place—but all in vain; and in the midst of the search a messenger came to announce that the wind was fair, that the ship would sail in one hour, and that the captain could wait for no man. M. de Tourville was obliged to take his departure without this precious packet.

Mrs. Percy was the only person in the family who had the humanity to pity him. He was too little of a soldier for Godfrey's taste, too much of a courtier for Mr. Percy, too frivolous for Caroline, and too little romantic for Rosamond.

"So," said Rosamond, "here was a fine beginning of a romance with a shipwreck, that ends only in five square merchants, who do not lose even a guilder of their property, and a diplomatist, with whom we are sure of nothing but that he has lost a bundle of papers for which nobody cares!"

In a few days the remembrance of the whole adventure began to fade from her fancy. M. de Tourville, and his snuff-box, and his essences, and his flattery, and his diplomacy, and his lost packet, and all the circumstances of the shipwreck, would have appeared as a dream, if they had not been maintained in the rank of realities by the daily sight of the wreck, and by the actual presence of the Dutch sailors, who were repairing the vessel.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW days after the departure of M. de Tourville, Commissioner Falconer, a friend, or at least a relation of Mr. Percy's, came to pay him a visit. As the commissioner looked out of the window, and observed the Dutch carpenter, who was passing by with tools under his arm, he began to talk of the late shipwreck. Mr. Falconer said he had heard much of the successful exertions and hospitality of the Percy family on that occasion—regretted that he had himself been called to town just at that time—asked many questions about the passengers on board the vessel, and when M. de Tourville was described to him, deplored that Mr. Percy had never thought of trying to detain this foreigner a few days longer.

For, argued the commissioner, though M. de Tourville might not be an accredited chargé d'affaires, yet since he was a person in some degree in an official capacity, and intrusted with secret negotiations, govern-

ment might have wished to know something about him. "And at all events," added the commissioner, with a shrewd smile, "it would have been a fine way of paying our court to a certain great man."

"So, commissioner, you still put your trust in great men?" said Mr. Percy.

"Not in all great men, but in some," replied the commissioner; "for instance, in your old friend Lord Oldborough, who, I'm happy to inform you, is just come into our neighbourhood to Clermont-park, of which he has at last completed the purchase, and has sent down his plate and pictures. Who knows but he may make Clermont-park his summer residence, instead of his place in Essex? and if he should, there's no saying of what advantage it might be; for I have it from the very best authority, that his lordship's influence in *a certain quarter* is greater than ever. Of course, Mr. Percy, you will wait upon Lord Oldborough when he comes to this part of the country?"

"No, I believe not," said Mr. Percy: "I have no connexion with him now."

"But you were so intimate with him abroad," expostulated Mr. Falconer.

"It is five-and-twenty years since I knew him abroad," said Mr. Percy; "and from all I have heard he is an altered man. When I was intimate with Lord Oldborough he was a generous, open-hearted youth: he has since become a politician, and I fear he has sold himself for a riband to the demon of ambition."

"No matter to whom he has sold himself, or for what," replied the commissioner; "that is his affair, not ours. We must not be too nice. He is well disposed towards you; and, my dear sir, I should take it as a very particular favour if you would introduce me to his lordship."

"With great pleasure," said Mr. Percy, "the very first opportunity."

"We must make opportunities—not wait for them," said the commissioner, smiling. "Let me entreat that you will pay your respects to his lordship as soon as he comes into the country. It really is but civil—and take me in your hand."

"With all my heart," said Mr. Percy; "but mine shall only be a visit of civility."

Well satisfied with having obtained this promise, Commissioner Falconer departed.

Besides his general desire to be acquainted with the great, the commissioner had particular reasons for wishing to be introduced at this time to Lord Oldborough, and he had a peculiar cause for being curious about M. de Tourville.—Mr. Falconer was in possession of the packet which that diplomatist had lost. It had been found by one of the commissioner's sons, Mr. John Falconer; or rather by Mr. John Falconer's dog Neptune, who brought it to his master when he was bathing in the sea the day after the shipwreck. It had been thrown by the tide among some sea-weed, where it was entangled, and where it lay hid till it was discovered by the dog. Mr. John Falconer had carried it home, and, boasting of his dog's sagacity, had produced it rather as a proof of the capital manner in which he had taught Neptune to fetch and carry, than from any idea or care for the value of the packet; John Falconer being one of those men who care for very little in this world

"While they have their dog and their gun."

Not so the commissioner, who immediately began to examine the papers with serious curiosity, to discover whether they could by any means be productive of advantage to him or his family. The sea-water had injured only the outer pages; but though the inner were not in the least damaged, it was difficult to make out their contents, for they were written in cipher. Commissioner Falconer, however, was skilled in the art of deciphering, and possessed all the ingenuity and patience necessary for the business. The title, superscription, and signature of the paper were obliterated, so that he could not guess from whom they came, or to whom they were addressed; he perceived that they were political; but of what degree of importance they might be he could not decide, till he heard of M. de Tourville, the diplomatist, and of his distress at the loss of this packet. The commissioner then resolved to devote the evening, ensuing day, and night, if requisite, to the business, that he might have it in readiness to carry with him when he went to pay his respects to Lord Oldborough. Foreseeing that something might be made of this intercepted despatch, and fearing that if he mentioned it to

Mr. Percy, that gentleman might object to opening the papers, Mr. Falconer left Percy-hall without giving the most remote hint of the treasure which he possessed, or of the use that he intended to make of his discovery.

Early in the ensuing week Mr. Percy went to pay his visit of civility, and Mr. Falconer his visit of policy, to Lord Oldborough. His lordship was so much altered, that it was with difficulty Mr. Percy recollected in him any traces of the same person. The Lord Oldborough he had formerly known was gay, gallant, and rather dissipated; of a frank, joyous air and manner. The Lord Oldborough whom he now saw was a serious, reserved-looking personage, with a face in which the lines of thought and care were deeply marked; large eyebrows, vigilant eyes, with an expression of ability and decision in his whole countenance, but not of tranquillity or of happiness. His manner was well-bred, but rather cold and formal: his conversation circumspect, calculated to draw forth the opinions, and profit by the information of others, rather than to assert or display his own. He seemed to converse, to think, to live, not with any enjoyment of the present, but with a view to some future object, about which he was constantly anxious.

Mr. Percy and Mr. Falconer both observed Lord Oldborough attentively during this visit; Mr. Percy studied him with philosophical curiosity, to discover what changes had been made in his lordship's character by the operation of ambition, and to determine how far that passion had contributed to his happiness; Mr. Falconer studied him with the interested eye of a man of the world, eager to discern what advantage could be made by ministering to that ambition, and to decide whether there was about his lordship the making of a good patron.

There was, he thought, the right twist, if he had but skill to follow and humour it in the working; but this was a task of much nicety. Lord Oldborough appeared to be aware of the commissioner's views, and was not disposed to burden himself with new *friends*. It seemed easy to go to a certain point with his lordship, but difficult to get further; easy to obtain his attention, but impossible to gain his confidence.

The commissioner, however, had many resources ready; many small means of fastening himself both on

his lordship's private and public interests. He determined to begin first with the despatch which he had been deciphering. With this view he led Mr. Percy to speak of the shipwreck, and of M. de Tourville. Lord Oldborough's attention was immediately awakened; and when Mr. Falconer perceived that the regret for not having seen M. de Tourville, and the curiosity to know the nature of his secret negotiations had been sufficiently excited, the commissioner quitted the subject, as he could go no further while restrained by Mr. Percy's presence. He took the first opportunity of leaving the room with his lordship's nephew, Col. Hauton, to look at some horses which were to run at the ensuing races.

Left alone with Mr. Percy, Lord Oldborough looked less reserved, for he plainly saw, indeed Mr. Percy plainly showed, that he had nothing to ask from the great man, but that he came only to see his friend.

"Many years since we met, Mr. Percy," said his lordship, sitting down and placing his chair for the first time, without considering whether his face or his back were to the light. "A great many years since we met, Mr. Percy; and yet I should not think so from your appearance; you do not look as if—shall I say it?—five-and-twenty years had passed since that time. But you have been leading an easy life in the country—the happiest life: I envy you."

Mr. Percy, thinking that these were words of course, the mere polite *cant* of a courtier to a country gentleman, smiled, and replied that few who were acquainted with their different situations in the world would imagine that Mr. Percy could be an object of envy to Lord Oldborough, a statesman at the summit of favour and fortune.

"Not the summit," said Lord Oldborough, sighing; "and if I were even at the summit, it is, you know, a dangerous situation. Fortune's wheel never stands still—the highest point is therefore the most perilous." His lordship sighed again as deeply as before. Then spoke, or rather led to the subject of general politics, of which Mr. Percy gave his opinions with freedom and openness, yet without ever forgetting the respect due to Lord Oldborough's situation. His lordship seemed sensible of this attention, sometimes nodded, and sometimes smiled, as Mr. Percy spoke of public men or measures; but when he expressed any sentiment of

patriotism, or of public virtue, Lord Oldborough took to his snuff-box, shook and levelled the snuff; and if he listened, listened as to words superfluous and irrelevant. When Mr. Percy uttered any principle favourable to the liberty of the press, or of the people, his lordship would take several pinches of snuff rapidly, to hide the expression of his countenance; if the topics were continued, his averted eyes and compressed lips showed disapprobation, and the difficulty he felt in refraining from reply. From reply, however, he did absolutely refrain; and after a pause of a few moments, with a smile, in a softer and lower voice than his usual tone, he asked Mr. Percy some questions about his family, and turned the conversation again to domestic affairs; expressed surprise that a man of Mr. Percy's talents should live in such absolute retirement, and seeming to forget what he had said himself but half an hour before, of the pains and dangers of ambition, and all that Mr. Percy had said of his love of domestic life, appeared to take it for granted that Mr. Percy would be glad to shine in public, if opportunity were not wanting. Upon this supposition, his lordship dexterously pointed out ways by which he might distinguish himself; threw out assurances of his own good wishes, compliments to his talents; and, in short, sounded his heart, still expecting to find corruption or ambition at the bottom. But none was to be found. Lord Oldborough was convinced of it—and surprised. Perhaps his esteem for Mr. Percy's understanding fell some degrees—he considered him as an eccentric person, acting from unaccountable motives; but still he respected him as that rarest of all things in a politician's eye—a really honest independent man. He believed also that Mr. Percy had some regard for him; and whatever portion it might be, it was valuable and extraordinary—for it was disinterested: besides, they could never cross in their objects—and as Mr. Percy lived out of the world, and had no connexion with any party, he was a perfectly safe man. All these thoughts acted so powerfully upon Lord Oldborough, that he threw aside his reserve, in a manner which would have astonished and delighted Mr. Falconer. Mr. Percy was astonished, but not delighted—he saw a noble mind corroded and debased by ambition—virtuous principle, generous feeling, stifled—a powerful, capacious understanding distorted—a soul, once expatiating

and full of high thoughts, now confined to a span—ben down to low concerns—imprisoned in the precincts of court.

"You pity me," said Lord Oldborough, who seemed to understand Mr. Percy's thoughts; "you pity me—I pity myself. But such is ambition, and I cannot live without it—once and always its slave."

"A person of such a strong mind as Lord Oldborough could emancipate himself from any slavery—even that of habit."

"Yes, if he wished to break through it—but he does not."

"Can he have utterly—"

"Lost his taste for freedom? you would say. Yes—utterly. I see you pity me," said his lordship with a bitter smile; "and," added he, rising proudly, "I am unused to be pitied, and I am awkward, I fear, under the obligation." Resuming his friendly aspect, however, in a moment or two, he followed Mr. Percy, who had turned to examine a fine picture."

"Yes; a Correggio. You are not aware, my dear sir," continued he, "that between the youth you knew at Paris, and the man who has now the honour to speak to you, there is nothing in common—absolutely nothing—except regard for Mr. Percy. You had always great knowledge of character, I remember; but with respect to my own, you will recollect, that I have the advantage of possessing *la carte du pays*. You are grown quite a philosopher, I find; and so am I, in my own way. In short, to put the question between us at rest for ever, *there is nothing left for me in life but ambition*. Now let us go to Correggio, or what you please."

Mr. Percy followed his lordship's lead immediately to Italy, to France, to Paris, and talking over old times and youthful days, the conversation grew gay and familiar. Lord Oldborough seemed enlivened and pleased, and yet, as if it was a reminiscence of a former state of existence, he often repeated, "Ah! those were young days—very young: I was a boy then—quite a boy." At last Mr. Percy touched upon love and women, and, by accident, mentioned an Italian lady whom they had known abroad. A flash of pale anger, almost of phrensy, passed across Lord Oldborough's countenance: he turned short, darted full on Mr. Percy a penetrating, imperious, interrogative look. Answered by the inn-

cence, the steady openness of Mr. Percy's countenance, Lord Oldborough grew red instantly, and, conscious of his unusual change of colour, stood actually abashed. A moment afterward, commanding his agitation, he forced his whole person to an air of tranquillity—took up the red-book, which lay upon his table—walked deliberately to a window, and, looking earnestly through his glass, asked if Mr. Percy could recollect who was member for some borough in the neighbourhood? The conversation after this languished; and though some efforts were made, it never recovered the tone of ease and confidence. Both parties felt relieved from an indefinable sort of constraint by the return of the other gentlemen. Mr. Falconer begged Mr. Percy to go and look at a carriage of a new construction, which the colonel had just brought from town; and the colonel accompanying Mr. Percy, the stage was thus left clear for the commissioner to open his business about M. de Tourville's packet. He did it with so much address, and with so little circumlocution, that Lord Oldborough immediately comprehended how important the papers might be to him, and how necessary it was to secure the decipherer. When Mr. Percy returned, he found the commissioner and his lordship in earnest and seemingly confidential conversation. Both Mr. Falconer and Mr. Percy were now pressed to stay to dine and to sleep at Clermont-park; an invitation which Mr. Percy declined, but which the commissioner accepted.

In the evening, when the company who had dined at Clermont-park were settled to cards and music, Lord Oldborough, after walking up and down the room with the commissioner in silence for some minutes, retired with him into his study, rang, and gave orders that they should not be interrupted on any account till supper. The servant informed his lordship that such and such persons, whom he had appointed, were waiting. "I cannot possibly see them till to-morrow," naming the hour. The servant laid on the table before his lordship a huge parcel of letters. Lord Oldborough, with an air of repressed impatience, bade the man send his secretary, Mr. Drakelow,—looked over the letters, wrote with a pencil, and with great despatch, a few words on the back of each—met Mr. Drakelow as he entered the room—put the unfolded letters all together into his

hands—"The answers on the back—to be made out in form—ready for signature at six to-morrow."

"Yes, my lord. May I ask—"

"Ask nothing, sir, if you please—I am busy—you have your directions."

Mr. Drakelow bowed submissive, and made his exit with great celerity.

"Now to our business, my dear sir," said his lordship, seating himself at the table with Mr. Falconer, who immediately produced M. de Tourville's papers.

It is not at this period of our story necessary to state precisely their contents; it is sufficient to say, that they opened to Lord Oldborough a scene of diplomatic treachery abroad, and of ungrateful duplicity at home. From some of the intercepted letters he discovered that certain of his colleagues, who appeared to be acting along with him with the utmost cordiality, were secretly combined against him; and were carrying on an underplot, to deprive him at once of popularity, favour, place, and power. The strength, firmness, hardness of mind, which Lord Oldborough exhibited at the moment of this discovery, perfectly amazed Mr. Falconer. His lordship gave no sign of astonishment, uttered no indignant exclamation, nor betrayed any symptoms of alarm; but he listened with motionless attention, when Mr. Falconer from time to time interrupted his reading, and put himself to great expense of face and lungs to express his abhorrence of "such inconceivable treachery." Lord Oldborough maintained an absolute silence, and waiting till the commissioner had exhausted himself in invective, would point with his pencil to the line in the paper where he had left off, and calmly say, "Have the goodness to go on—Let us proceed, sir, if you please."

The commissioner went on till he came to the most important and interesting point, and then glancing his eye on his intended patron's profile, which was towards him, he suddenly stopped. Lord Oldborough, raising his head from the hand on which it leaned, turned his full front face upon Mr. Falconer.

"Let me hear the whole, if you please, sir. To form a judgment upon any business, it is necessary to have the whole before us. You need not fear to shock my feelings, sir. I wish always to see men and things as they are." Mr. Falconer still hesitating, and turning over the leaves—"As my friend in this business, Mr.

Falconer," continued his lordship, "you will comprehend that the essential point is to put me as soon as possible in possession of the facts—then I can decide and act. If it will not fatigue you too much, I wish to go through these papers before I sleep."

"Fatigue! O my lord, I am not in the least—cannot be fatigued. But the fact is, I cannot go on; for the next pages I have not yet deciphered—the cipher changes here."

Lord Oldborough looked much disappointed and provoked; but, after a few minutes' pause, calmly said, "What time will it take, sir, to decipher the remainder?"

The commissioner protested he did not know—could not form an idea—he and his son had spent many hours of intense labour on the first papers before he could make out the first cipher—now this was a new one, probably more difficult, and whether he could make it out at all, or in what time, he was utterly unable to say. Lord Oldborough replied, "Let us understand one another at once, Commissioner Falconer, if you please. My maxim, and the maxim of every man in public life, is, or ought to be—Serve me, and I will serve you. I have no pretensions to Mr. Falconer's friendship on any other grounds, I am sensible; nor on any other terms can he have a claim to whatever power of patronage I possess. But I neither serve nor will be served by halves: my first object is to make myself master, as soon as possible, of the contents of the papers in your hands; my next to secure your inviolable secrecy on the whole transaction."

The commissioner was going to make vows of secrecy and protestations of zeal, but Lord Oldborough cut all that short with "Of course—of course," pronounced in the driest accent, and went on with, "Now, sir, you know my object; will you do me the honour to state yours? You will excuse my abruptness—time in some circumstances is every thing. Do me and yourself the justice to say at once what return I can make for the service you have done or may do me and government."

"My only hesitation in speaking, my lord, was—"

"Have no hesitation in speaking, I beseech you, sir."

I beseech, in tone, was in effect, *I command* you, sir; —and Mr. Falconer, under the influence of an imperious and superior mind, came at once to that point which he

had not intended to come to for a month, or to approach till after infinite precaution and circumlocution.

"My object is to push my son Cunningham in the diplomatic line, my lord—and I wish to make him one of your secretaries."

The commissioner stopped short, astonished to find that the truth, and the whole truth, had absolutely passed his lips, and in such plain words; but they could not be recalled; he gasped for breath—and began an apoloetical sentence about poor Mr. Drakelow, whom he should be sorry to injure or displace.

"Never mind that now—time enough to think of Drakelow," said Lord Oldborough, walking up and down the room—then stopping short, "I must see your son, sir."

"I will bring him here to-morrow, if your lordship pleases."

"As soon as possible! But he can come surely without your going for him—write and beg that we may see him at breakfast—at nine, if you please."

The letter was written, and despatched immediately. Lord Oldborough, while the commissioner was writing, noted down the heads of what he had learned from M. de Tourville's packet: then locked up those of the papers which had been deciphered, put the others into Mr. Falconer's charge, and recommended it to him to use all possible despatch in deciphering the remainder. The commissioner declared he would sit up all night at the task; this did not appear to be more than was expected. His lordship rang, and ordered candles in Mr. Falconer's room, then returned to the company in the saloon, without saying another word. None could guess by his countenance or deportment that any unusual circumstance had happened, or that his mind was in the least perturbed. Mrs. Drakelow thought he was wholly absorbed in a rubber of whist, and Miss Drakelow at the same time was persuaded that he was listening to her music.

Punctual to the appointed hour—for ambition is as punctual to appointments as love—Mr. Cunningham Falconer made his appearance at nine, and was presented by his father to Lord Oldborough, who received him, not with any show of gracious kindness, but as one who had been forced upon him by circumstances, and whom, for valuable considerations, he had bargained to

take into his service. To try the young diplomatist's talents, Lord Oldborough led him first to speak on the subject of the Tourville papers, then urged him on to the affairs of Germany, and the general interests and policy of the different courts of Europe. Trembling, and in agony for his son, the commissioner stood aware of the danger of the youth's venturing out of his depth, aware also of the danger of showing that he dared not venture, and incapable of deciding between these equal fears: but soon he was reassured by the calmness of his son. Cunningham, who had not so much information or capacity, but who had less sensibility than his father, often succeeded where his father's timidity prognosticated failure. Indeed, on the present occasion, the care which the young diplomatist took not to commit himself, the dexterity with which he "helped himself by countenance and gesture," and "was judicious by signs," proved that he was well skilled in all those arts of *seeming wise*, which have been so well noted for use by "the greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind." Young though he was, Cunningham was quite sufficiently slow, circumspect, and solemn to deserve to be ranked among those whom Bacon calls *formalists*, "who do nothing, or little, very solemnly,—who seem always to keep back somewhat; and when they know within themselves they speak of what they do not know, would, nevertheless, seem to others to know that of which they may not well speak."

Lord Oldborough listened to whatever he said, and marked all that he did not say with an air of attentive composure, which, as Mr. Falconer thought, augured well for his son; but now and then there was, for scarcely a definable portion of time, an expression of humour in his lordship's eye, a sarcastic smile, which escaped the commissioner's observation, and which, even if he had observed, he could not, with his limited knowledge of Lord Oldborough's character, have rightly interpreted. If his lordship had expressed his thoughts, perhaps they might have been, though in words less quaint, nearly the same as those of the philosophic statesman who says, "It is a ridiculous thing, and fit for a satire to persons of judgment, to see what shifts these *formalists* have, and what prospectives to make superficies to seem body that hath depth and bulk."

But Lord Oldborough philosophizing, and Lord Old-

borough acting, were two different people. His perception of the ridicule of the young secretary's solemnity, and of the insufficiency of his information and capacity, made no alteration in the minister's determination. The question was, not whether the individual was fit for this place, or that employment, but whether it was expedient he should have it for the security of political power. Waiving all delicacy, Lord Oldborough now, as in most other cases, made it his chief object to be understood and obeyed; therefore he applied directly to the universal motive, and spoke the universal language of interest.

"Mr. Falconer," said he, "if you put me in possession of the remainder of M. de Tourville's papers this night, I will to-morrow morning put this young gentleman into the hands of my present secretary, Mr. Drakelow, who will prepare him for the situation you desire. Mr. Drakelow himself will, probably, soon leave me, to be employed more advantageously for his majesty's service, in some other manner."

The decipherers, father and son, shut themselves up directly, and set to work with all imaginable zeal. The whole packet was nearly expounded before night, and the next morning Lord Oldborough performed his part of the agreement. He sent for Mr. Drakelow, and said, "Mr. Drakelow, I beg that, upon your return to town, you will be so good as to take this young gentleman, Mr. Cunningham Falconer, to your office. Endeavour to prepare him to supply your place with me whenever it may be proper for his majesty's service, and for your interest, to send you to Constantinople, or elsewhere."

Mr. Drakelow, though infinitely surprised and displeased, bowed all submission. Nothing else he knew was to be done with Lord Oldborough. His lordship, as soon as his secretary had left the room, turned to Cunningham, and said, "You will not mention any thing concerning M. de Tourville's intercepted papers to Mr. Drakelow, or to any other person. Affairs call me to town immediately: to-morrow morning, at six, I set off. You will, if you please, sir, be ready to accompany me. I will not detain you longer from any preparations you may have to make for your journey."

No sooner had the father and son quitted Lord Oldborough's presence than Mr. Falconer exclaimed with exultation, "I long to see our good cousin Percy, that I

may tell him how I have provided already for one of my sons."

"But remember, sir," said Cunningham, "that Mr. Percy is to know nothing of the Tourville packet."

"To be sure not," said Mr. Falconer; "he is to know nothing of the means, he is to see only the end—the successful end. Ha! cousin Percy, I think we know rather better than you do how to make something of every thing—even of a shipwreck."

"To prevent his having any suspicions," continued Cunningham, "it will be best to give Mr. Percy some probable reason for Lord Oldborough's *taking to us* so suddenly. It will be well to hint that you have opportunities of obliging about the borough, or about the address at the county meeting, or—"

"No, no; no particulars; never go to particulars," said old Falconer, "stick to generals, and you are safe. Say, in general, that I had an opportunity of obliging government. Percy is not curious, especially about *jobbing*. He will ask no questions; or, if he should, I can easily put him upon a wrong scent. Now, Cunningham, listen to me: I have done my best, and have pushed you into a fine situation: but remember, you cannot get on in the diplomatic line without a certain degree of diplomatic information. I have pointed this out to you often; you have neglected to make yourself master of these things, and, for want of them in office, you will come, I fear, some day or other, to shame."

"Do not be afraid of that—no danger of my coming to shame any more than a thousand other people in office, who never trouble themselves about diplomatic information, and all that. There is always some clerk who knows the forms, and with those, and looking for what one wants upon the spur of the occasion in books and pamphlets, and so forth, one may go on very well—if one does but know how to keep one's own counsel. You see I got through with Lord Oldborough to-day—"

"Ay—but I assure you I trembled for you, and I could have squeezed myself into an auger-hole once, when you blundered about that treaty of which I knew that you knew nothing."

"O sir, I assure you I had turned over the leaves. I was correct enough as to the dates; and, suppose I blundered, as my brother Buckhurst says, half the world never know what they are saying, and the other half

never find it out. Why, sir, you were telling me the other night such a blunder of Prince Potemkin's—"

"Very true," interrupted the commissioner; "but you are not Prince Potemkin, nor yet a prime minister; if you were, no matter how little you knew—you might get other people to supply your deficiencies. But now, in your place, and in the course of making your way upwards, you will be called upon to supply *others* with the information they may want. And you know I shall not be always at your elbow; therefore I really am afraid—"

"Dear sir, fear nothing," said Cunningham: "I shall do as well as others do—the greatest difficulty is over. I have taken the first step, and it has cost nothing."

"Well, get on, my boy—honestly, if you can—but get on."

CHAPTER III.

With the true genius of a political castle-builder, Mr. Falconer began to add story after story to the edifice, of which he had thus promptly and successfully laid the foundation. Having by a lucky hit provided for one of his sons, that is to say, put him in a fair way of being provided for, the industrious father began to form plans for the advancement of his other two sons, Buckhurst and John: Buckhurst was destined by his father for the church; John for the army. The commissioner, notwithstanding he had been closeted for some hours with Lord Oldborough, and notwithstanding his son Cunningham was to be one of his lordship's secretaries, was well aware that little or no progress had been made in Lord Oldborough's real favour or confidence. Mr. Falconer knew that he had been literally *paid by the job*, that he was considered and treated accordingly; yet, upon the whole, he was well pleased that it should be so, for he foresaw the possibility of his doing for his lordship many more jobs, public and private. He lost no time in preparing for the continuity of his secret services, and in creating a political necessity for his being employed in future, in a manner that might ensure the advancement

of the rest of his family. In the first place, he knew that Lord Oldborough was desirous, for the enlargement of the grounds at Clermont-park, to purchase certain adjoining lands, which, from some ancient pique, the owner was unwilling to sell. The proprietor was a tenant of Mr. Falconer's: he undertook to negotiate the business, and to use his influence to bring his tenant to reason. This offer, made through Cunningham, was accepted by Lord Oldborough, and the negotiation led to fresh communications. There was soon to be a county meeting, and an address was to be procured in favour of certain measures of government, which it was expected would be violently opposed. In the commissioner's letters to his son, the private secretary, he could say and suggest whatever he pleased; he pointed out the gentlemen of the county who ought to be conciliated, and he offered his services to represent things properly to some with whom he was intimate. The sheriff and the under-sheriff also should know, without being informed directly from ministry, what course in conducting the meeting would be agreeable in a certain quarter —who so proper to say and do all that might be expedient as Mr. Falconer, who was on the spot, and well acquainted with the county? The commissioner was informed by the private secretary, that his services would be acceptable. There happened also, at this time, to be some disputes and grievances in that part of the country about tax-gatherers. Mr. Falconer hinted, that he could soften and accommodate matters, if he were empowered to do so—and he was so empowered. Besides all this, there was a borough in that county in which the interest of government had been declining; attempts were made to *open the borough*—Mr. Falconer could be of use in *keeping it close*—and he was commissioned to do every thing in his power in this business. In a short time Mr. Falconer was acting on all these points as an agent and partisan of Lord Oldborough's. But there was one thing which made him uneasy; he was acting here, as in many former instances, merely upon vague hopes of future reward.

While his mind was full of these thoughts, a new prospect of advantage opened to him in another direction. Colonel Hauton, Lord Oldborough's nephew, staid during his uncle's absence at Clermont-park, to be in readiness for the races, which, this year, were

expected to be uncommonly fine. Buckhurst Falconer had been at school and at the university with the colonel, and had frequently helped him in his Latin exercises. The colonel having been always deficient in scholarship, he had early contracted an aversion to literature, which at last amounted to an antipathy even to the very sight of books, in consequence, perhaps, of his uncle's ardent and precipitate desire to make him apply to them while his head was full of tops and balls, kites and ponies. Be this as it may, Commissioner Falconer thought his son Buckhurst might profit by his school friendship, and might now renew and improve the connexion. Accordingly Buckhurst waited upon the colonel,—was immediately recognised, and received with promising demonstrations of joy.

It would be difficult, indeed impossible, to describe Colonel Hauton, so as to distinguish him from a thousand other young men of the same class, except, perhaps, that he might be characterized by having more exclusive and inveterate selfishness. Yet this was so far from appearing or being suspected on a first acquaintance, that he was generally thought a sociable, good-natured fellow. It was his absolute dependence upon others for daily amusement and ideas, or, rather, for knowing what to do with himself, that gave him this semblance of being sociable; the total want of proper pride and dignity in his whole deportment, a certain *slang* and familiarity of tone, gave superficial observers the notion that he was good-natured. It was Colonel Hauton's great ambition to look like his own coachman; he succeeded only so far as to look like his groom: but though he kept company with jockeys and coachmen, grooms and stable-boys, yet not the stiffest, haughtiest flat-backed don of Spain, in Spain's proudest days, could be more completely aristocratic in his principles or more despotic in his habits. This could not break out to his equals, and his equals cared little how he treated his inferiors. His present pleasure, or rather his present business, for no man made more a business of pleasure than Colonel Hauton, was *the turf*. Buckhurst Falconer could not here assist him as much as in making Latin verses—but he could admire and sympathize; and the colonel, proud of being now the superior, proud of his *knowing style* and his *capital* stud, enjoyed Buckhurst's company particularly, pressed him to stay

at Clermont-park, and to accompany him to the races. There was to be a *famous* match between Colonel Hauton's High-blood and Squire Burton's Wildfire; and the preparations of the horses and of their riders occupied the intervening days. With all imaginable care, anxiety, and solemnity, these important preparations were conducted. At stated hours, Colonel Hauton, and with him Buckhurst, went to see High-blood rubbed down, and fed, and watered, and exercised, and minuted, and rubbed down, and littered. Next to the horse, the rider, Jack Giles, was to be attended to with the greatest solicitude; he was to be weighed—and starved—and watched—and drammed—and *sweated*—and weighed again—and so on in daily succession; and, harder still, through this whole course he was to be kept in humour: "None that ever sarved man or beast," as the stable-boy declared, "ever worked harder for their bread than his master and master's companion did this week for their pleasure." At last the great, the important day arrived, and Jack Giles was weighed for the last time in public, and so was Tom Hand, Squire Burton's rider—and High-blood and Wildfire were brought out; and the spectators, assembled in the stand, and about the scales, were all impatience, especially those who had betted on either of the horses. And, Now, Hauton!—Now, Burton!—Now, High-blood!—Now, Wildfire!—Now, Jack Giles!—and—Now, Tom Hand! resounded on all sides. The gentlemen on the race-ground were all on tiptoe in their stirrups. The ladies in the stand stretched their necks of snow, and nobody looked at them. Two men were run over, and nobody took them up. Two ladies fainted, and two gentlemen betted across them. This was no time for nice observances—Jack Giles's spirit began to flag—and Tom Hand's judgment *to tell*—High-blood, on the full stretch, was within view of the winning post, when Wildfire, quite in wind, was put to his speed by the judicious Tom Hand—he sprang forward, came up with High-blood—passed him—Jack Giles strove in vain to regain his ground—High-blood was blown, beyond the power of whip or spur—Wildfire reached the post, and Squire Burton won the match hollow.

His friends congratulated him and themselves loudly, and extolled Tom Hand and Wildfire to the skies. In the moment of disappointment, Colonel Hauton, out of

humour, said something that implied a suspicion of unfairness on the part of Burton or Tom Hand, which the honest squire could not brook either for self or rider. He swore that his Tom Hand was as honest a fellow as any in England, and he would back him for such. The colonel, depending on his own and his uncle's importance, on his party and his flatterers, treated the squire with some of the haughtiness of rank, which the squire retorted with some rustic English humour. The colonel, who had not wit at will to put down his antagonist, became still more provoked to see that such a low-born fellow as the squire should and could laugh, and make others laugh. For the lack of wit the colonel had recourse to insolence, and went on from one impertinence to another, till the squire, enraged, declared that he would not be browbeat by any lord's nephew or jackanapes colonel that ever wore a head; and as he spoke, tremendous in his ire, Squire Burton brandished high the British horsewhip. At this critical moment, as it has been asserted by some of the bystanders, the colonel *quailed*, and backed a few paces; but others pretend that Buckhurst Falconer pushed before him. It is certain that Buckhurst stopped the blow—wrested the horsewhip from the squire—was challenged by him on the spot—accepted the challenge—fought the squire—*wounded* him—appeared on the race-ground afterward, and was admired by the ladies in public, and by his father in private, who looked upon the duel and horsewhipping, from which he thus saved his patron's nephew, as the most fortunate circumstance that could have happened to his son upon his entrance into life.

"Such an advantage as this gives us such a claim upon the colonel—and, indeed, upon the whole family. Lord Oldborough, having no children of his own, looks to the nephew as his heir; and though he may be vexed now and then by the colonel's extravagance, and angry that he could not give this nephew more of a political turn, yet, such as he is, depend upon it he can do what he pleases with Lord Oldborough. Whoever has the nephew's ear has the uncle's heart; or I should say, whoever has the nephew's heart, has the uncle's ear."

"Mayn't we as well put hearts out of the question on all sides, sir?" said Buckhurst.

"With all my heart," said his father, laughing, "pro-

vided we don't put a good living out of the question on our side."

Buckhurst looked averse, and said he did not know there was any such thing in question.

"No!" said his father: "was it then from the pure and abstract love of being horsewhipped, or shot at, that you took this quarrel off his hands?"

"Faith! I did it from spirit, pure spirit," said Buckhurst: "I could not stand by, and see one who had been my schoolfellow horsewhipped—no, damn it, if he did not stand by himself, *yet* I could not but stand by *him*, for you know I was there as one of his party—and as I backed his bets on High-blood, I could do no less than back his cause altogether.—Oh! I could not stand by and see *a chum* of my own horsewhipped."

"Well, that was all very spirited and generous; but now, as you are something too old for mere schoolboy notions," said the commissioner, "let us look a little further, and see what we can make of it. It's only a silly boyish thing as you consider it; but I hope we can turn it to good account."

"I never thought of turning it to account, sir."

"Think of it now," said the father, a little provoked by the careless disinterestedness of the son. "In plain English, here is a colonel in his majesty's service saved from a horsewhipping—a whole noble family saved from disgrace: these are things not to be forgotten; that is, not to be forgotten, if you force people to remember them: otherwise—my word for it—I know the great—the whole would be forgotten in a week. Therefore, leave me to follow the thing up properly with the uncle, and do you never let it sleep with the nephew: sometimes a bold stroke, sometimes a delicate touch, just as the occasion serves, or as may suit the company present—all that I trust to your own address and judgment."

"Trust nothing, sir, to my address or judgment; for in these things I have neither. I always act just from impulse and feeling, right or wrong—I have no talents for *finesse*—leave them all to Cunningham—that's his trade, and he likes it, luckily: and you should be content with having one such genius in your family—no family could bear two."

"Come, come, pray be serious, Buckhurst. If you have not or will not use any common sense and address to advance yourself, leave that to me. You see how

I have pushed up Cunningham already; and all I ask of you is to be quiet, and let me push you up."

"Oh! dear sir, I am very much obliged to you: if that is all, I will be quite quiet—so that I am not to do any thing shabby or dirty for it. I should be vastly glad to get a good place, and be provided for handsomely."

"No doubt; and let me tell you that many I could name have, with inferior claims, and without any natural connexion or relationship, from the mere favour of proper friends, obtained church benefices of much greater value than the living we have in our eye: you know—"

"I do not know, indeed," said Buckhurst; "I protest I have no living in my eye."

"What! not know that the living of Chipping-Friars is in the gift of Colonel Hauton—and the present incumbent has had one paralytic stroke already. There's a prospect for you, Buckhurst!"

"To be frank with you, sir, I have no taste for the church."

"No taste for nine hundred a year, Buckhurst! No desire for fortune, Mr. Philosopher!"

"Pardon me, a very strong taste for that, sir—not a bit of a philosopher—as much in love with fortune as any man, young or old: is there no way to fortune but through the church?"

"None for you so sure and so easy, all circumstances considered," said his father. "I have planned and settled it, and you have nothing to do but to get yourself ordained as soon as possible. I shall write to my friend the bishop for that purpose this very night."

"Let me beg, father, that you will not be so precipitate. Upon my word, sir, I cannot go into orders. I am not—in short, I am not fit for the church."

The father stared with an expression between anger and astonishment.

"Have not you gone through the university?"

"Yes, sir: but—but I am scarcely sober, and *staid*, and moral enough for the church. Such a wild fellow as I am, I really could not in conscience—I would not upon any account, for any living upon earth, or any emolument, go into the church, unless I thought I should do credit to it."

"And why should not you do credit to the church? I don't see that you are wilder than your neighbours, and need not be more scrupulous. There is G——, who

at your age was wild enough, but he took up in time, and is now a plump dean. Then there is the bishop that is just made: I remember him such a youth as you are. Come, come, these are idle scruples. Let me hear no more, my dear Buckhurst, of your conscience."

"Dear sir, I never pleaded my conscience on any occasion before—you know that I am no puritan—but really on this point I have some conscience, and I beg you not to press me further. You have other sons; and if you cannot spare Cunningham, that treasure of diplomacy!—there's John; surely you might contrive to spare him for the church."

"Spare him I would, and welcome. But you know I could never get John into orders."

"Why not, sir? John, I'll swear, would have no objection to the church, provided you could get him a good fat living."

"But I am not talking of *his* objections. To be sure he would make no objection to a good fat living, nor would anybody in his senses, except yourself. But I ask you how I could possibly get your brother John into the church? John's a dunce—and you know it."

"Nobody better, sir: but are there no dunces in the church? And as you are so good as to think that I'm no wilder than my neighbours, you surely will not say that my brother is more a dunce than his neighbours. Put him into the hands of a clever grinder or crammer, and they would soon cram the necessary portion of Latin and Greek into him, and they would get him through the university for us readily enough; and a degree once obtained, he might snap his fingers at Latin and Greek all the rest of his life. Once in orders, and he might sit down upon his fat living, or lie down content, all his days; only taking care to have some poor devil of a curate up and about, doing duty for him."

"So I find you have no great scruples for your brother, whatever you may have for yourself."

"Sir, I am not the keeper of my brother's conscience. Indeed, if I were, you might congratulate me in the words of Sir B. R. upon the possession of a sinecure place."

"It is a pity, Buckhurst, that you cannot use your wit for yourself as well as for other people. Ah! Buckhurst! Buckhurst! you will, I fear, do worse in the world than any of your brothers · for wits are always *unlucky*:

sharp-sighted enough to every thing else, but blind, stone blind to their own interest. Wit is folly when one is talking of serious business."

"Well, my dear father, *be agreeable*, and I will not be witty. In fact, in downright earnest, the sum total of the business is, that I have a great desire to go into the army, and I entreat you to procure me a commission."

"Then the sum total of the business is, that I will not; for I cannot afford to purchase you a commission, and to maintain you in the army—"

"But by using interest, perhaps, sir," said Buckhurst.

"My interest must be all for your brother John; for I tell you I can do nothing else for him but put him into the army. He's a dunce. I must get him a commission, and then I have done with him."

"I wish I was a dunce," said Buckhurst, sighing; "for then I might go into the army—instead of being forced into the church."

"There's no force upon your inclinations, Buckhurst," said his father, in a soft tone; "I only show you that it is impossible I should maintain you in the army, and therefore beg you to put the army out of your head. And I don't well see what else you could do. You have not application enough for the bar, nor have I any friends among the attorneys except Sharpe, who, between you and me, might take your dinners, and leave you without a brief afterward. You have talents, I grant," continued the commissioner, "and if you had but application, and if your uncle the judge had not died last year—"

"O sir, he is dead, and we can't help it," interrupted Buckhurst. "And as for me, I never had, and never shall have, any application: so pray put the bar out of your mind."

"Very cavalier, indeed!—but I will make you serious at once, Buckhurst. You have nothing to expect from my death. I have not a farthing to leave you. My place, you know, is only for life; your mother's fortune is all in annuity, and two girls to be provided for; and to live as we must live—up to and beyond my income—shall have nothing to leave. Though you are my eldest son, you see it is in vain to look to my death; so into the church you must go, or be a beggar—and get a living or starve. Now I have done," concluded the com-

missioner, quitting his son; "and I leave you to think of what has been said."

Buckhurst thought and thought; but still his interest and his conscience were at variance, and he could not bring himself either to be virtuous or vicious enough to comply with his father's wishes. He could not decide to go into the church merely from interested motives—from that his conscience revolted; he could not determine to make himself fit to do credit to the sacred profession—against this his habits and his love of pleasure revolted. He went to his brother John to try what could be done with him. Latin and Greek were insuperable objections with John; besides, though he had a dull imagination in general, John's fancy had been smitten with one bright idea of an epaulette, from which no considerations, fraternal, political, moral, or religious, could distract his attention. His genius, he said, was for the army, and into the army he would go. So to his genius Buckhurst, in despair, was obliged to leave him. The commissioner neglected not to push the claim which he had on Colonel Hauton; and he chose his time so well, when proper people were by, and when the colonel did not wish to have the squire, and the horsewhip, and the duel brought before the public, that he obtained, if not a full acknowledgment of obligation, a promise of doing any thing and every thing in his power for his friend Buckhurst. Any thing and every thing were indefinite, unsatisfactory terms; and the commissioner, bold in dealing with the timid temper of the colonel, though he had been cautious with the determined character of the uncle, pressed his point—named the living of Chipping-Friars—showed how well he would be satisfied, and how well he could represent matters if the promise was given; and at the same time made it understood how loudly he could complain, and how disgraceful his complaints might prove to the Oldborough family, if his son was treated with ingratitude. The colonel particularly dreaded that he should be suspected of want of spirit, and that his uncle should have the transaction laid before him in this improper point of view. He pondered for a few moments, and the promise for the living of Chipping-Friars was given. The commissioner, secure of this, next returned to the point with his son, and absolutely insisted upon his—going into orders. Buckhurst, who had tried wit and raillery

in vain, now tried persuasion and earnest entreaties; but these were equally fruitless: his father, though an easy, good-natured man, except where his favourite plans were crossed, was peremptory, and, without using harsh words, he employed the harshest measures to force his son's compliance. Buckhurst had contracted some debts at the university, none of any great consequence, but such as he could not pay immediately. The bets he had laid and lost upon High-blood were also to be provided for; debts of honour claimed precedency, and must be directly discharged. His father positively refused to assist him, except upon condition of his compliance with his wishes; and so far from affording him any means of settling with his creditors, it has been proved, from the commissioner's *private* answers to some of their applications, that he not only refused to pay a farthing for his son, but encouraged the creditors to threaten him in the strongest manner with the terrors of law and arrest. Thus pressed and embarrassed, this young man, who had many honourable and religious sentiments and genuine feelings, but no power of adhering to principle or reason, was miserable beyond expression one hour, and the next he became totally forgetful that there was any thing to be thought of but the amusement of the moment. Incapable of coming to any serious decision, he walked up and down his room, talking, partly to himself, and partly, for want of a better companion, to his brother John.

"So I must pay Wallis to-morrow, or he'll arrest me; and I must give my father an answer about the church to-night—for he writes to the bishop, and will wait no longer. Oh, hang it! hang it, John! what the devil shall I do? My father won't pay a farthing for me, unless I go into the church!"

"Well, then, why can't you go into the church?" said John: "since you are through the university, the worst is over."

"But I think it so wrong, so base—for money—for emolument! I cannot do it. I am not fit for the church—I know I shall disgrace it," said Buckhurst, striking his forehead. "I cannot do it—I cannot—it is against my conscience."

John stopped, as he was filling his shooting-pouch, and looked at Buckhurst (his mouth half-open) with an expression of surprise at these demonstrations of sensi-

bility He had some sympathy for the external symptoms of pain which he saw in his brother, but no clear conception of the internal cause.

"Why, Buckhurst," said he, "if you cannot do it, you can't, you know, Buckhurst; but I don't see why you should be a disgrace to the church more than another, as my father says. If I was but through the university, I had as lieve go into the church as not—that's all I can say. And if my genius was not for the military line, there's nothing I should relish better than the living of Chipping-Friars, I'm sure. The only thing that I see against it is, that that paralytic incumbent may live many a year: but, then, you get your debts paid now by only going into orders, and that's a great point. But if it goes against your conscience—you know best—if you can't, you can't."

"After all, I can't go to jail—I can't let myself be arrested—I can't starve—I can't be a beggar," said Buckhurst; "and, as you say, I should be so easy if these cursed debts were paid—and if I got this living of nine hundred a year, how comfortable I should be! Then I could marry, by Jove! and I'd propose directly for Caroline Percy, for I'm confoundedly in love with her—such a sweet-tempered, good creature!—not a girl so much admired! Colonel Hauton, and G——, and P——, and D—— asked me, 'Who is that pretty girl?'—She certainly is a very pretty girl."

"She certainly is," repeated John. "This devil of a fellow never cleans my gun."

"Not regularly handsome neither," pursued Buckhurst; "but, as Hauton says, fascinating and new; and a new face in public is a great matter. Such a fashionable-looking figure, too—though she has not *come out* yet; dances charmingly—would dance divinely, if she would let herself out; and she sings and plays like an angel, fifty times better than our two precious sisters, who have been *at it* from their cradles, with all the Signior *Squalicis* at their elbows. Caroline Percy never exhibits in public: the mother does not like it, I suppose."

"So I suppose," said John. "Curse this flint!—flints are growing worse and worse every day. I wonder what in the world are become of all the good flints there used to be."

"Very unlike our mother, I am sure," continued Buck-

hurst. "There are Georgiana and Bell at all the parties and concerts as regularly as any of the professors, standing up in the midst of the singing men and women, favouring the public in as fine a bravura style, and making as ugly faces as the best of them. Do you remember the Italian's compliment to Miss ****** ?—'I vish, miss, I had your *assurance*.'"

"Very good, ha!—very fair, faith!" said John. "Do you know what I've done with my powder-horn?"

"Not I—put it in the oven, maybe, to dry," said Buckhurst. "But as I was saying of my dear Caroline—*My* Caroline! she is not mine yet."

"Very true," said John.

"Very true! Why, John, you are enough to provoke a saint!"

"I was agreeing with you, I thought," said John.

"But nothing is so provoking as always agreeing with one—and I can tell you, Mr. Verytrue, that though Caroline Percy is not mine yet, I have nevertheless a little suspicion that, such even as I am, she might readily be brought to love, honour, and obey me."

"I don't doubt it, for I never yet knew a woman that was not ready enough to be married," quoth John. "But this is not the right ramrod, after all."

"There you are wrong, John, on the other side," said Buckhurst; "for I can assure you, Miss Caroline Percy is not one of your young ladies who would marry anybody. And even though she might like me, I am not at all sure that she would marry me—for obedience to the best of fathers might interfere."

"There's the point," said John; "for thereby hangs the fortune; and it would be a *deused* thing to have the girl without the fortune."

"Not so *deused* a thing to me as you think," said Buckhurst, laughing; "for, poor as I am, I can assure you the fortune is not my object—I am not a mercenary dog."

"By-the-by," cried John, "now you talk of dogs, I wish to heaven above you had not given away that fine puppy of mine to that foolish old man, who never was out a-shooting in his days; the dog's just as much thrown away as if you had drowned him. Now, do you know, if I had had *the making* of that puppy—"

"Puppy!" exclaimed Buckhurst: "is it possible you can be thinking of a puppy, John, when I am talking to

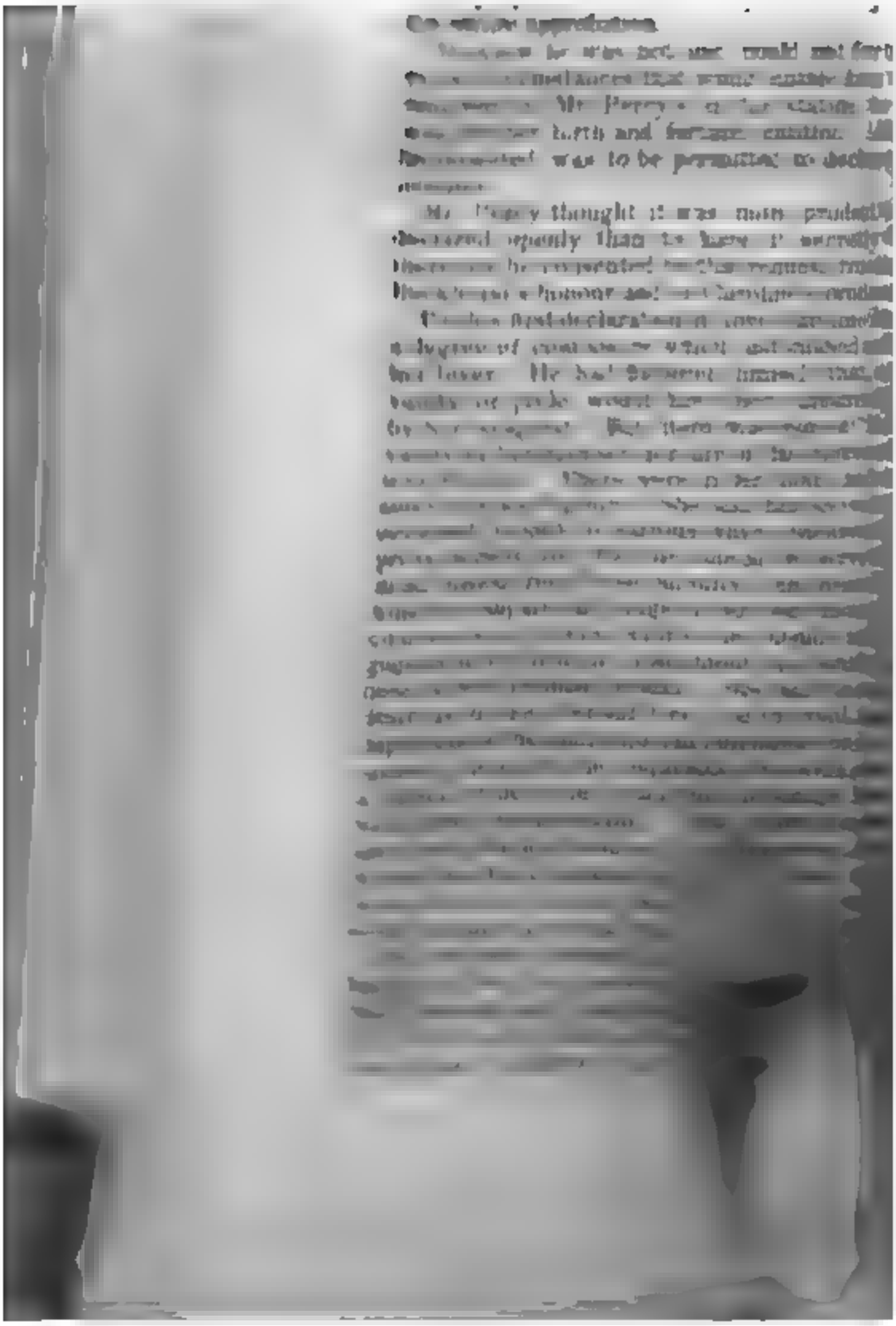
you of what is of so much consequence?—when the whole happiness of my life is at stake?"

"Stake—Well, but what can I do more?" said John: "have not I been standing here this half-hour with my gun in my hand this fine day, listening to you prosing about I don't know what?"

"That's the very thing I complain of—that you do not know what: a pretty brother!" said Buckhurst.

John made no further reply, but left the room sullenly, whistling as he went.

Left to his own cogitations, Buckhurst fell into a revery upon the charms of Caroline Percy, and upon the probable pleasure of dancing with her at the race-ball; after this, he recurred to the bitter recollection, that he must decide about his debts, and the church. A bright idea came into his mind, that he might have recourse to Mr. Percy, and, perhaps, prevail upon him to persuade his father not to force him to a step which he could not reconcile either to his conscience or his inclination. No sooner thought than done—He called for his horse and rode as hard as he could to Percy-hall. When a boy he had been intimate in the Percy family; but he had been long absent at school and at the university; they had seen him only during the vacations, and since his late return to the country. Though Mr. Percy could not entirely approve of his character, yet he thought there were many good points about Buckhurst; the frankness and candour with which he now laid his whole mind and all his affairs open to him—debts—love—fears—hopes—follies—faults—without reserve or extenuation, interested Mr. Percy in his favour. Pitying his distress, and admiring the motives from which he acted, Mr. Percy said, that though he had no right to interfere in Mr. Falconer's family affairs, yet that he could, and would, so far assist Buckhurst, as to lend him the money for which he was immediately pressed, that he might not be driven by necessity to go into that profession, which ought to be embraced only from the brightest and purest motives. Buckhurst thanked him with transports of gratitude for this generous kindness, which was far beyond his expectations, and which indeed had never entered into his hopes. Mr. Percy seized the moment when the young man's mind was warmed with good feelings to endeavour to bring him to serious thoughts and rational determinations



living of Chipping-Friars given away. And where am I to find nine hundred a year, I pray you, at a minute's notice, for this conscientious youth, who, by that time, will tell me his scruples were all nonsense, and that I should have known better than to listen to them? Nine hundred a year does not come in a man's way at every turn of his life; and if he gives it up now, it is not my fault—let him look to it."

Mr. Percy replied, "that Buckhurst had declared himself ready to abide by the consequences, and that he promised he would never complain of the lot he had chosen for himself, much less reproach his father for his compliance, and that he was resolute to maintain himself at the bar."

"Yes: very fine. And how long will it be before he makes nine hundred a year at the bar?"

Mr. Percy, who knew that none but worldly considerations made any impression upon this father, suggested that he would have to maintain his son during the life of the paralytic incumbent, and the expense of Buckhurst's being at the bar would not probably be greater; and though it might be several years before he could make nine hundred or perhaps one hundred a year at the bar, yet that if he succeeded, which, with Buckhurst's talents, nothing but the want of perseverance could prevent, he might make nine thousand a year by the profession of the law—more than in the scope of human probability, and with all the patronage his father's address could procure, he could hope to obtain in the church.

"Well, let him try—let him try," repeated the commissioner, who, vexed as he was, did not choose to run the risk of disobliging Mr. Percy, losing a good match for him, or undergoing the scandal of its being known that he forced his son into the church.

For obtaining this consent, however reluctantly granted by the commissioner, Buckhurst warmly thanked Mr. Percy, who made one condition with him, that he would go up to town immediately to commence his studies.

This Buckhurst faithfully promised to do, and only implored permission to declare his attachment to Caroline. Caroline was at this time not quite eighteen, too young, her father said, to think of forming any serious

engagement, even were it with a person suited to her in fortune and in every other respect.

Buckhurst declared that he had no idea of endeavouring even to obtain from Miss Caroline Percy any promise or engagement. He had been treated, he said, too generously by her father, to attempt to take any step without his entire approbation.

He knew he was not, and could not for many years be, in circumstances that would enable him to support a daughter of Mr. Percy's in the station to which she was, by her birth and fortune, entitled. All he asked, he repeated, was to be permitted to declare to her his passion.

Mr. Percy thought it was more prudent to let it be declared openly than to have it secretly suspected; therefore he consented to this request, trusting much to Buckhurst's honour and to Caroline's prudence.

To this first declaration of love Caroline listened with a degree of composure which astonished and mortified her lover. He had flattered himself that, at least, her vanity or pride would have been apparently gratified by her conquest. But there was none of the flutter of vanity in her manner, nor any of the repressed satisfaction of pride. There were in her looks and words only simplicity and dignity. She said that she was at present occupied happily in various ways, endeavouring to improve herself, and that she should be sorry to have her mind turned from these pursuits; she desired to secure time to compare and judge of her own tastes, and of the characters of others, before she should make any engagement or form an attachment on which the happiness of her life must depend. She said she was equally desirous to keep herself free, and to avoid injuring the happiness of the man who had honoured her by his preference; therefore she requested he would discontinue a pursuit, which she could not encourage him to hope would ever be successful. Long before the time when she should think it prudent to marry, even if she were to meet with a character perfectly suited to hers, she hoped that her cousin Buckhurst would be united to some woman who would be able to return his affection.

The manner in which all this was said convinced Buckhurst that she spoke the plain and exact truth. From the ease and frankness with which she had hitherto conversed with him, he had flattered himself that it would not be difficult to prepossess her heart in his

favour; but now when he saw the same ease and simplicity unchanged in her manner, he was convinced that he had been mistaken. He had still hopes that in time he might make an impression upon her, and he urged that she was not yet sufficiently acquainted with his character to be able to judge whether or not it would suit hers. She frankly told him all she thought of him, and in doing so impressed him with the conviction that she had both discerned the merits and discovered the defects of his character: she gave him back a representation of himself, which he felt to be exactly just, and yet which struck him with all the force of novelty.

"It is myself," he exclaimed: "but I never knew myself till now."

He had such pleasure in hearing Caroline speak of him, that he wished even to hear her speak of his faults —of these he would, however, have been better pleased, if she had spoken with less calmness and indulgence.

"She is a great way from love as yet," thought Buckhurst. "It is astonishing, that with powers and knowledge on all other subjects so far above her age, she should know so little even of the common language of sentiment; very extraordinary, that with so much kindness, and such an amiable disposition, she should have so little sensibility."

The novelty of this insensibility, and of this perfect simplicity, so unlike all he had observed in the manners and minds of other young ladies to whom he had been accustomed, had, however, a great effect upon her lover. The openness and unaffected serenity of Caroline's countenance at this moment appeared to him more charming than any other thing he had ever beheld in the most finished coquette, or the most fashionable beauty.

What a divine creature she will be a few years hence! thought he. The time will come when Love may waken this Psyche!—And what glory it would be to me to produce to the world such perfection!

With these mixed ideas of love and glory, Buckhurst took leave of Caroline; still he retained hope in spite of her calm and decided refusal. He knew the power of constant attention, and the display of ardent passion, to win the female heart. He trusted also in no slight degree to the reputation he had already acquired of being a favourite with the fair sex.

CHAPTER IV.

Buckhurst Falconer returned to Percy-hall.

He came provided with something like an excuse—he had business—his father had desired him to ask Mr. Percy to take charge of a box of family papers for him, as he apprehended, that, when he was absent from the country, his steward had not been as careful of them as he ought to have been.

Mr. Percy willingly consented to take charge of the papers, but he desired that, before they were left with him, Buckhurst should take a list of them.

Buckhurst was unprepared for this task.

His head was intent on a ball and on Caroline. However, he was obliged to undergo this labour; and when he had finished it, Mr. Percy, who happened to be preparing some new leases of considerable farms, was so busy, in the midst of his papers, that there was no such thing as touching upon the subject of the ball. At length the ladies of the family appeared, and all the parchments were at last out of the way. Buckhurst began upon his real business, and said he meant to delay going to town a few days longer, because there was to be a ball early in the ensuing week. "Nothing more natural," said Mr. Percy, "than to wish to go to a ball; yet," added he, gravely, "when a man of honour gives his promise that nothing shall prevent him from commencing his studies immediately, I did not expect that the first temptation—"

"Oh! my dear Mr. Percy," said Buckhurst, endeavouring to laugh away the displeasure, or rather the disappointment, which he saw in Mr. Percy's countenance, "a few days can make no difference."

"Only the difference of a term," said Mr. Percy; "and the difference between promising and performing. You thought me unjust yesterday, when I told you that I feared you would prefer present amusement to future happiness."

"Amusement!" exclaimed Buckhurst, turning suddenly towards Caroline; "do you imagine *that* is my

object?" Then approaching her, he said in a low voice, "It is a natural mistake for you to make, Miss Caroline Percy—for you—who know nothing of love. Amusement! It is not amusement that detains me—can you think I would stay for a ball, unless I expected to meet you there?"

"Then I will not go," said Caroline: "it would be coquetry to meet you there, when, as I thought, I had distinctly explained to you yesterday—"

"Oh! don't repeat that," interrupted Buckhurst: "a lady is never bound to remember what she said yesterday—especially if it were a cruel sentence; I hope hereafter you will change your mind—let me live upon hope."

"I will never give any false hopes," said Caroline; 'and since I cannot add to your happiness, I will take care not to diminish it. I will not be the cause of your breaking your promise to my father: I will not be the means of tempting you to lower yourself in his opinion —I will not go to this ball."

Buckhurst smiled, went on with some commonplace raillery about cruelty, and took his leave, fancying that Caroline could not be in earnest in her threat, as he called it. As his disobedience would have the excuse of *love*, he thought he might venture to transgress the letter of the promise.

When the time came, he went to the ball, almost certain that Caroline would break her resolution, as he knew that she had never yet been at a public assembly, and it was natural that one so sure of being admired would be anxious to be seen. His surprise and disappointment were great when no Caroline appeared.

He asked Rosamond if her sister was not well?

"Perfectly well."

"Then why is she not here?"

"Don't you recollect her telling you that she would not come?"

"Yes: but I did not think she was in earnest."

"How little you know of Caroline," replied Rosamond, "if you imagine that either in trifles or in matters of consequence *she* would say one thing and do another."

"I feel," said Buckhurst, colouring, "what that emphasis on *she* means. But I did not think you would

have reproached me so severely. *I thought* my cousin Rosamond was my friend."

"So I am—but not a friend to your faults."

"Surely it is no great crime in a young man to like going to a ball better than going to the Temple! But I am really concerned," continued Buckhurst, "that I have deprived Miss Caroline Percy of the pleasure of being here to-night—and this was to have been her first appearance in public—I am quite sorry."

"Caroline is not at all impatient to appear in public; and as to the pleasure of being at a ball, it costs her little to sacrifice that, or any pleasure of her own, for the advantage of others."

"When Miss Caroline Percy said something about my falling in her father's opinion for such a trifle, I could not guess that she was serious."

"She does not," replied Rosamond, "think it a trifle to break a promise."

Buckhurst looked at his watch. "The mail-coach will pass through this town in an hour. It shall take me to London—Good-by—I will not stay another moment—I am gone. I wish I had gone yesterday—pray, my dear, good Rosamond, say so for me to Caroline."

At this moment a beautiful young lady, attended by a large party, entered the ball-room. Buckhurst stopped to inquire who she was.

"Did you never see my sister before?" replied Colonel Hauton—"Oh! I must introduce you, and you shall dance with her."

"You do me a great deal of honour—I shall be very happy—that is, I should be extremely happy—only unfortunately I am under a necessity of setting off immediately for London—I'm afraid I shall be late for the mail—Good night."

Buckhurst made an effort, as he spoke, to pass on; but Colonel Hauton, bursting into one of his horse-laughs, held him fast by the arm, swore he must be drunk, for that he did not know what he was saying or doing.

Commissioner Falconer, who now came up, whispered to Buckhurst, "Are you mad? You can't refuse—you'll affront for ever!"

"I can't help it," said Buckhurst: "I'm sorry for it—I cannot help it."

He still kept on his way towards the door

"But," expostulated the commissioner, following him out, "you can surely stay, be introduced, and pay your compliments to the young lady—you are time enough for the mail. Don't affront people for nothing, who may be of the greatest use to you."

"But, my dear father, I don't want people to be of use to me."

"Well, at any rate, turn back just to see what a charming creature Miss Hauton is. Such an entrée! So much the air of a woman of fashion! every eye riveted—the whole room in admiration of her!"

"I did not see any thing remarkable about her," said Buckhurst, turning back to look at her again. "If you think I should affront—I would not really affront Hauton, who has always been so civil to me—I'll go and be introduced and pay my compliments, since you say it is necessary; but I shall not stay five minutes."

Buckhurst returned to be introduced to Miss Hauton. This young lady was so beautiful that she would, in all probability, have attracted general attention, even if she had not been the sister of a man of Colonel Hauton's fortune, and the niece of a nobleman of Lord Oldborough's political consequence; but undoubtedly these circumstances much increased the power of her charms over the imaginations of her admirers. All the gentlemen at this ball were unanimous in declaring that she was a most fascinating creature. Buckhurst Falconer and Godfrey Percy were introduced to her nearly at the same time. Godfrey asked her to dance—and Buckhurst could not help staying to see her. She danced so gracefully, that while he thought he had staid only five minutes, he delayed a quarter of an hour. Many gentlemen were ambitious of the honour of Miss Hauton's hand; but, to their disappointment, she declined dancing any more; and though Buckhurst Falconer had determined not to have staid, nor to dance with her, yet an undefinable perverse curiosity induced him to delay a few minutes, to determine whether she conversed as well as she danced. The sound of her voice was sweet and soft, and there was an air of languor in her whole person and manner, with an apparent indifference to general admiration, which charmed Godfrey Percy, especially as he perceived that she could be animated by his conversation. To Buckhurst's wit she listened

with politeness, but obviously without interest. Buckhurst looked at his watch again—but it was now too late for the mail. Rosamond was surprised to see him still in the ball-room. He laid all the blame on his father, and pleaded that he was detained by parental orders, which he could not disobey. He sat beside Rosamond at supper, and used much eloquence to convince her that he had obeyed against his will.

In the mean time Godfrey, seated next to his fair partner, became every moment more and more sensible of the advantages of his situation. Towards the end of supper, when the buzz of general conversation increased, it happened that somebody near Miss Hauton spoke of a marriage that was likely to take place in the fashionable world, and all who thought themselves, or who wished to be thought, good authorities, began to settle *how* it would be, and *when* it would be: but a gentleman of Godfrey's acquaintance, who sat next to him, said, in a low voice, "It will never be."—"Why?" said Godfrey. The gentleman answered in a whisper, "There is an insuperable objection: *the mother*—don't you recollect?—the mother was a *divorcée*; and no man of sense would venture to marry the daughter—"

"No, certainly," said Godfrey; "I did not know the fact."

He turned, as he finished speaking, to ask Miss Hauton if she would permit him to help her to something that stood before him; but to his surprise and alarm he perceived that she was pale, trembling, and scarcely able to support herself. He, for the first moment, thought only that she was taken suddenly ill, and he was going to call Lady Oldborough's attention to her indisposition—but Miss Hauton stopped him, and said in a low tremulous voice—"Take no notice." He then poured out a glass of water, put it within her reach, turned away in obedience to her wishes, and sat in such a manner as to screen her from observation. A confused recollection now came across his mind of his having heard, many years ago, when he was a child, of the divorce of some Lady Anne Hauton, and the truth occurred to him that this was Miss Hauton's mother, and that Miss Hauton had overheard the whisper.

In a few moments, anxious to see whether she had recovered, and yet afraid to distress her by his attention,

he half-turned his head, and, looking down at her plate, asked if she was better.

"Quite well, thank you."

He then raised his eyes, and looking as unconcernedly as he could, resumed his former attitude, and began some trifling conversation; but whatever effort he made to appear the same as before, there was some constraint, or some difference in his voice and manner, which the young lady perceived—her voice immediately changed and faltered—he spoke quickly—both spoke at the same time, without knowing what either said or what they said themselves—their eyes met, and both were silent—Miss Hauton blushed deeply. He saw that his conjecture was right, and she saw, by Godfrey's countenance, that her secret was discovered: her eyes fell, she grew pale, and instantly fainted. Lady Oldborough came to her assistance, but she was too helpless a fine lady to be of the least use: she could only say that it must be the heat of the room, and that she should faint herself in another moment.

Godfrey whispered to his mother—and Miss Hauton was carried into the open air. Lady Oldborough and her smelling-bottle followed. Godfrey, leaving the young lady with them, returned quickly to the supper-room, to prevent any one from intruding upon her. He met Buckhurst Falconer and Colonel Hauton at the door, and stopped them with assurances that Miss Hauton had all the assistance she could want.

"I'll tell you what she wants," cried the colonel to Buckhurst; "a jaunt to Cheltenham, which would do her, and me too, a d—d deal of good; for, now the races are over, what the devil shall we do with ourselves here? I'll rattle Maria off the day after to-morrow in my phaeton. No—Buckhurst, my good fellow, I'll drive you in the phaeton, and I'll make Lady Oldborough take Maria in the coach."

Godfrey Percy, who, as he passed, could not avoid hearing this invitation, did not stay to learn Buckhurst's answer, but went instantly into the room. No one, not even the gentleman whose whisper had occasioned it, had the least suspicion of the real cause of Miss Hauton's indisposition. Lady Oldborough had assigned as the occasion of the young lady's illness "the heat of the room," and an old medical dowager was eager to estab-

lish that "it was *owing* to some strawberry ice, as, to her certain knowledge, ice, in some shape or other, was the cause of most of the mischief in the world."

While the partisans of heat and ice were still battling, and while the dancers had quite forgotten Miss Hauton, and every thing but themselves, the young lady returned to the room. Godfrey went to order Mrs. Percy's carriage, and the Percy family left the ball.

When Godfrey found himself in the carriage with his own family, he began eagerly to talk of Miss Hauton; he was anxious to know what all and each thought of her, in general, and in particular: he talked so much of her, and seemed so much surprised that anybody could wish to talk or think of any thing else, that Mrs. Percy could not help smiling. Mr. Percy, leaning back in the carriage, said that he felt inclined to sleep.

"To sleep!" repeated Godfrey: "is it possible that you can be sleepy, sir?"

"Very possible, my dear son—it is past four o'clock, I believe."

Godfrey was silent for some minutes, and he began to think over every word and look that had passed between him and Miss Hauton. He had been only amused with her conversation, and charmed by her grace and beauty in the beginning of the evening; but the sensibility she had afterward shown had touched him so much, that he was extremely anxious to interest his father in her favour. He explained the cause of her fainting, and asked whether she was not much to be pitied. All pitied her—and Godfrey, encouraged by this pity, went on to prove that she ought not to be blamed for her mother's faults; that nothing could be more unjust and cruel than to think ill of the innocent daughter, because her mother had been imprudent.

"But, Godfrey," said Rosamond, "you seem to be answering some one who has attacked Miss Hauton—whom are you contending with?"

"With himself," said Mr. Percy. "His prudence tells him that the gentleman was quite right in saying that no man of sense would marry the daughter of a woman who had conducted herself ill; and yet he wishes to make an exception to the general rule in favour of pretty Miss Hauton."

"Pretty! My dear father, she is a great deal more than pretty: if she were only pretty, I should not be so

much interested about her. But putting her quite out of the question, I do not agree with the general principle that a man should not marry the daughter of a woman who has conducted herself ill."

"I think you did agree with it till you knew that it applied to Miss Hauton's case," said Mr. Percy: "as well as I remember, Godfrey, I heard you once answer on a similar occasion, 'No, no—I will have nothing to do with any of the daughters of that mother—black cats have black kittens'—or 'black dogs have black puppies' —I forget which, you said."

"Whichever it was, I am ashamed of having quoted such a vulgar proverb," said Godfrey.

"It may be a vulgar proverb, but I doubt whether it be a vulgar error," said Mr. Percy: "I have great faith in the wisdom of nations. So much so in the present instance, that I own I would rather a son of mine were to marry a well-conducted farmer's daughter, of *honest parentage*, than the daughter of an ill-conducted lady of rank or fashion. The farmer's daughter might be trained into a gentlewoman, and might make my son at least a faithful wife, which is more than he could expect, or than I should expect, from the young lady who had early seen the example of what was bad, and whose predispositions would be provided with the excuse of the old song."

Godfrey took fire at this, and exclaimed against the injustice of a doctrine which would render wretched for life many young women who might possess every amiable and estimable quality, and who could never remedy the misfortune of their birth. Godfrey urged, that while this would render the good miserable, it would be the most probable means of driving the weak from despair into vice.

Rosamond eagerly joined her brother's side of the question. Mr. Percy, though he knew, he said, that he must appear one of the "fathers with flinty hearts," protested that he felt great compassion for the unfortunate individuals, as much as a man who was not in love with any of them could reasonably be expected to feel.

"But now," continued he, "granting that all the consequences which Godfrey has predicted were to follow from my doctrine, yet I am inclined to believe that society would upon the whole be the gainer by such severity, or, as I am willing to allow it to be, such appa-

rent injustice. The adherence to this principle would be the misery, perhaps the ruin, of a few; but would, I think, tend to the safety and happiness of so many, that the evil would be nothing in comparison to the good. The certainty of shame descending to the daughters would be a powerful means of deterring mothers from ill-conduct; and might probably operate more effectually to restrain licentiousness in high life than heavy damages, or the now transient disgrace of public trial and divorce. As to the apparent injustice of punishing children for the faults of their parents, it should be considered that in most other cases children suffer discredit more or less for the faults of their parents, of whatever kind; and that, on the other hand, they enjoy the advantage of the good characters which their parents establish. This *must* be so, from the necessary effect of experience, and from the nature of human belief, except in cases where passion operates to destroy or suspend the power of reason—"

"That is not my case, I assure you, sir," interrupted Godfrey.

Mr. Percy smiled, and continued:—"It appears to me highly advantageous that *character*, in general, should descend to posterity as well as riches or honours, which are, in fact, often the representations, or consequences, in other forms, of different parts of character—industry, talents, courage. For instance, in the lower ranks of life it is a common saying, that a good name is the richest legacy a woman can leave her daughter. This idea should be impressed more fully than it is upon the higher classes. At present, money too frequently forms a compensation for every thing in high life. It is not uncommon to see the natural daughters of men of rank, or of large fortune, portioned so magnificently, either with solid gold, or promised *family protection*, that their origin by the mother's side, and the character of the mother, are quite forgotten. Can this be advantageous to good morals? Surely a mother living in open defiance of the virtue of her sex should not see her illegitimate offspring, instead of being her shame, become her glory.—On the contrary, nothing could tend more to prevent the ill conduct of women in high life than the certainty that men who, from their fortune, birth, and character, might be deemed the most desirable matches, would shun

alliances with the daughters of women of tainted reputation."

Godfrey eagerly declared his contempt for those men who married for money or ambition either illegitimate or legitimate daughters. He should be sorry, he said, to do any thing that would countenance vice, which ought to be put out of countenance by all means—if possible. But he was not the guardian of public morals; and even if he were, he should still think it unjust that the innocent should suffer for the guilty. That, for his own part, if he could put his father's disapprobation out of the question, he should easily settle his mind, and overcome all objections in a *prudential* point of view to marrying an amiable woman who had had the misfortune to have a worthless mother.

Mrs. Percy had not yet given her opinion—all eyes turned towards her. As usual, she spoke with persuasive gentleness and good sense; she marked where each had, in the warmth of argument, said more than they intended, and she seized the just medium by which all might be conciliated. She said that she thought the important point to be considered was, what the *education* of the daughter had been; on this a prudent man would form his opinion, not on the mere accident of her birth. He would inquire whether the girl had lived with the ill-conducted mother—had been in situations to be influenced by her example, or by that of the company which she kept. If such had been the case, Mrs. Percy declared she thought it would be imprudent and wrong to marry the daughter. But if the daughter had been separated in early childhood from the mother, had never been exposed to the influence of her example, had, on the contrary, been educated carefully in strict moral and religious principles, it would be cruel, because unnecessary, to object to an alliance with such a woman. The objection would appear inconsistent, as well as unjust, if made by those who professed to believe in the unlimited power of education.

Godfrey rubbed his hands with delight—Mr. Percy smiled, and acknowledged that he was compelled to admit the truth and justice of this statement.

"Pray do you know, Godfrey," said Rosamond, "whether Miss Hauton lived with her mother, or was educated by her?"

"I cannot tell," said Godfrey; "but I will make it my

business to find out. At all events, my dear madam," continued he, "a child cannot decide by whom she will be educated. It is not her fault if her childhood be passed with a mother who is no fit guardian for her."

"I acknowledge," said Mrs. Percy, "that is her misfortune."

"And would you make it an irreparable misfortune?" said Godfrey in an expostulatory tone: "my dear mother—only consider."

"My dear son, I do consider," said Mrs. Percy; "but I cannot give up the point of education. I should be very sorry to see a son of mine married to a woman who had been in this unfortunate predicament. But," added Mrs. Percy, after a few minutes' silence, "if from the time her own will and judgment could be supposed to act, she had chosen for her companions respectable and amiable persons, and had conducted herself with uniform propriety and discretion, I think I might be brought to allow of an exception to my general principle." She looked at Mr. Percy.

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Percy; "exceptions must not merely be allowed, but will force themselves in favour of superior merit, of extraordinary excellence, which will rise above every unfavourable circumstance in any class, in any condition of life in which it may exist, which will throw off any stigma, however disgraceful, counteract all prepossessions, however potent, rise against all power of depression—redeem a family—redeem a race."

"Now, father, you speak like yourself!" cried Godfrey: "this is all I ask—all I wish."

"And here," continued Mr. Percy, "is an adequate motive for a good and great mind—yes, *great*—for I believe there are great minds in the female as well as in the male part of the creation; I say, here is an adequate motive to excite a woman of a good and great mind to exert herself to struggle against the misfortunes of her birth."

"For instance," said Rosamond, "my sister Caroline is just the kind of woman who, if she had been one of these unfortunate daughters, would have made herself an exception."

"Very likely," said Mr. Percy, laughing; "but why you should go so far out of your way to make an unfor-

tunate daughter of poor Caroline, and why you should picture to yourself, as Dr. Johnson would say, what would be probable in an impossible situation, I cannot conceive, except for the pleasure of exercising, as you do upon most occasions, a fine romantic imagination."

"At all events, *I* am perfectly satisfied," said Godfrey. "Since you admit of exceptions, sir, I agree with you entirely."

"No, not entirely. I am sure you cannot agree with me entirely, until I admit Miss Hauton to be one of my exceptions."

"That will come in time, if she deserve it," said Mrs. Percy.

Godfrey thanked his mother with great warmth, and observed that she was always the most indulgent of friends.

"But remember my *if*," said Mrs. Percy: "I know nothing of Miss Hauton at present, except that she is very pretty, and that she has engaging manners—do you, my dear Godfrey?"

"Yes, indeed, ma'am, I know a great deal more of her."

"Did you ever see her before this night?"

"Never," said Godfrey.

"And at a ball!" said Mrs. Percy: "you must have wonderful penetration into character. But Cupid, though blindfold, can see more at a single glance than a philosophic eye can discover with the most minute examination."

"But, Cupid out of the question, let me ask you, mother," said Godfrey, "whether you do not think Miss Hauton has a great deal of sensibility? You saw that there was no affectation in her fainting."

"None, none," said Mrs. Percy.

"There, father!" cried Godfrey, in an exulting tone; "and sensibility is the foundation of every thing that is most amiable and charming, of every grace, of every virtue in woman."

"Yes," said Mr. Percy, "and perhaps of some of their errors and vices. It depends upon how it is governed, whether sensibility be a curse or a blessing to its possessor, and to society."

"A curse!" cried Godfrey; "yes, if a woman be doomed—"

"Come, come, my dear Godfrey," interrupted Mr.

Percy, "do not let us talk any more upon the subject just now, because you are too much interested to reason coolly."

Rosamond then took her turn to talk of what was uppermost in her thoughts—Buckhurst Falconer, whom she alternately blamed and pitied, accused and defended; sometimes rejoicing that Caroline had rejected his suit, sometimes pitying him for his disappointment, and repeating that, with such talents, frankness, and generosity of disposition, it was much to be regretted that he had not that rectitude of principle, and steadiness of character, which alone could render him worthy of Caroline. Then passing from compassion for the son to indignation against the father, she observed, "that Commissioner Falconer seemed determined to counteract all that was good in his son's disposition, that he actually did every thing in his power to encourage Buckhurst in a taste for dissipation, as it seemed on purpose to keep him in a state of dependence, and to enslave him to the *great*."

"I hope, with all my heart, I hope," continued Rosamond, "that Buckhurst will have sense and steadiness enough to refuse; but I heard his father supporting that foolish Colonel Hauton's persuasions, and urging his poor son to go with those people to Cheltenham. Now, if once he gets into that extravagant, dissipated set, he will be ruined for ever!—Adieu to all hopes of him. He will no more go to the bar than I shall—he will think of nothing but pleasure; he will run in debt again, and then farewell principle, and with principle, farewell all hopes of him. But I think he will have sense and steadiness enough to resist his father, and to refuse to accompany this profligate patron, Colonel Hauton.—Godfrey, what is your opinion? Do you think Buckhurst will go?"

"I do not know," replied Godfrey: "in his place I should find it very easy, but in my own case, I confess, I should feel it difficult, to refuse, if I were pressed to join a party of pleasure with Miss Hauton."

CHAPTER V.

Godfrey Percy went in the morning to inquire after the health of his fair partner: this was only a common civility. On his way thither he overtook and joined a party of gentlemen, who were also going to Clermont-park. They entered into conversation, and talked of the preceding night—one of the gentlemen, an elderly man, who had not been at the ball, happened to be acquainted with Miss Hauton, and with her family. Godfrey heard from him all the particulars respecting Lady Anne Hauton, and was thrown into a melancholy revery by learning that Miss Hauton had been educated by this mother, and had always lived with her till her ladyship's death, which happened about two years before this time. After receiving this intelligence, Godfrey heard little more of the conversation that passed till he reached Clermont-park. A number of young people were assembled in the music-room practising for a concert. Miss Hauton was at the piano-forte when he entered the room: she was sitting with her back to the door, surrounded by a crowd of amateurs; she did not see him—he stood behind, listening to her singing. Her voice was delightful; but he was surprised, and not pleased, by the choice of her songs: she was singing, with some other high-bred young ladies, songs which, to use the gentlest expression, were rather too *anacreontic*—songs which, though sanctioned by fashion, were not such as a young lady of taste would prefer, or such as a man of delicacy would like to hear from his sister or his wife. They were nevertheless highly applauded by all the audience, except by Godfrey, who remained silent behind the young lady. In the fluctuation of the crowd he was pressed nearer and nearer to her chair. As she finished singing a fashionable air, she heard a sigh from the person behind her.

"That's your favourite, I think?" said she, turning round, and looking up. "Mr. Percy! I—I thought it was Mr. Falconer." Face, neck, hands, suddenly blushed: she stooped for a music-book, and searched for some

time in that attitude for she knew not what, while all the gentlemen officiously offered their services, and begged only to know for what book she was looking.

"Come, come, Maria," cried Colonel Hauton, "what the d—— are you about? Can't you give us another of these? You can't be better. Come, you're keeping Miss Drakelow."

"Go on, Miss Drakelow, if you please, without me."

"Impossible. Come, come, Maria, what the deuse are you at?"

Miss Hauton, afraid to refuse her brother, afraid to provoke the comments of the company, began to sing, or rather to attempt to sing—her voice faltered; she cleared her throat, and began again—worse still, she was out of tune: she affected to laugh. Then, pushing back her chair, she rose, drew her veil over her face, and said, "I have sung till I have no voice left.—Does nobody walk this morning?"

"No, no," said Colonel Hauton; "who the deuse would be *bored* with being broiled at this time of day? Miss Drakelow—Miss Chatterton, give us some more music, I beseech you; for I like music better in a morning than at night—the mornings, when one can't go out, are so confoundedly long and heavy."

The young ladies played, and Miss Hauton seated herself apart from the group of musicians, upon a *bergère*, leaning on her hand, in a melancholy attitude. Buckhurst Falconer followed, and sat down beside her, endeavouring to entertain her with some witty anecdote.

She smiled with effort, listened with painful attention, and the moment the anecdote was ended, her eyes wandered out of the window. Buckhurst rose, vacated his seat, and before any of the other gentlemen who had gathered round could avail themselves of that envied place, Miss Hauton, complaining of the intolerable heat, removed nearer to the window, to an ottoman, one half of which was already so fully occupied by a large dog of her brother's that she was in no danger from any other intruder. Some of the gentlemen, who were not blessed with much sagacity, followed, to talk to her of the beauty of the dog, which she was stroking; but to a eulogium upon its long ears, and even to a quotation from Shakspeare about dewlaps, she listened with so vacant an air, that her followers gave up the point, and successively retired, leaving her to her meditations.

Godfrey, who had kept aloof, had in the mean time been looking at some books that lay on a reading table. *Maria Hauton* was written in the first page of several of them. All were novels—some French, and some German, of a sort which he did not like.

"What have you there, Mr. Percy?" said Miss Hauton. "Nothing worth your notice, I am afraid. I dare say you do not like novels."

"Pardon me, I like some novels very much."

"Which?" said Miss Hauton, rising and approaching the table.

"All that are just representations of life and manners, or of the human heart," said Godfrey, "provided they are—"

"Ah! the human heart!" interrupted Miss Hauton: "the heart only can understand the heart—who, in modern times, can describe the human heart?"

"Not to speak of foreigners—Miss Burney—Mrs. Inchbald—Mrs. Opie," said Godfrey.

"True; and yet I—and yet—" said Miss Hauton, pausing, and sighing.

"And yet that was not what I was thinking of," she should have said, had she finished her sentence with the truth; but this not being convenient, she left it unfinished, and began a new one, with "Some of these novels are sad trash—I hope Mr. Godfrey Percy will not judge of my taste by them: that would be condemning me for the crimes of my bookseller, who will send us down every thing new that comes out."

Godfrey disclaimed the idea of condemning or blaming Miss Hauton's taste: "he could not," he said, "be so presumptuous, so impertinent."

"So then," said she, "Mr. Godfrey Percy is like all the rest of his sex, and I must not expect to hear the truth from him."

She paused—and looked at a print which he was examining.—"I would, however, rather have him speak severely than think hardly of me."

"He has no right to speak, and certainly no inclination to think hardly of Miss Hauton," replied Godfrey, gravely, but with an emotion which he in vain endeavoured to suppress. To change the conversation, he asked her opinion about a figure in the print. She took out her glass, and stooped to look quite closely at it. "Before you utterly condemn me," continued she,

speaking in a low voice, "consider how fashion silences one's better taste and feelings, and how difficult it is when all around one—"

Miss Chatterton, Miss Drakelow, and some officers of their suite came up at this instant; a deputation, they said, to bring Miss Hauton back, to favour them with another song, as she must now have recovered her voice.

"No—no—excuse me," said she, smiling languidly; "I beg not to be pressed any more. I am really not well—I absolutely cannot sing any more this morning. I have already sung so much—*too much*," added she, when the deputation had retired, so that the last words could be heard only by him for whom they were intended.

Though Miss Hauton's apologizing thus for her conduct, and making a young gentleman, with whom she was but just acquainted, the judge of her actions, might be deemed a still further proof of her indiscretion, yet the condescension was so flattering, and it appeared such an instance of ingenuous disposition, that Godfrey was sensibly touched by it. He followed the fair Maria to her ottoman, from which she banished Pompey the Great, to make room for him. The recollection of his father's warning words, however, came across Godfrey's mind; he bowed an answer to a motion that invited him to the dangerous seat, and continued standing with an air of safe respect.

"I hope you will have the goodness to express to Mrs. Percy how much I felt her kindness to me last night, when—when I wanted it so much. There is something so soothing, so gentle, so indulgent about Mrs. Percy, so *loveable!*"

"She is very good, very indulgent, indeed," said Godfrey, in a tone of strong affection,—"very *loveable*—that is the exact word."

"I fear it is not English," said Miss Hauton.

"*Il mérite bien de l'être*," said Godfrey.

A profound silence ensued. Colonel Hauton came up to this pair, while they were still silent, and with their eyes fixed upon the ground.

"D——d agreeable you two seem," cried the colonel. "Buckhurst, you have always so much to say for yourself, do help your cousin here: I'm sure I know how to pity him, for many a time, the morning after a ball, I've

been with my partner in just as bad a quandary—without a word to throw to a dog."

"Impossible, surely, colonel, when you had such a fine animal as this," said Godfrey, caressing Pompey, who lay at his feet. "Where did you get this handsome dog?"

The colonel then entered into the history of Pompey the Great. "I was speaking," said Miss Hauton, "to Mr. Godfrey Percy of his family—relations of yours, Mr. Falconer, are not they? He has another sister, I think, some one told me, a beautiful sister, Caroline, who was not at the ball last night?"

"Yes," said Buckhurst, who looked at this instant also to the dog for assistance—"Pompey! Pompey! poor fellow!"

"Is Miss Caroline Percy like her mother?"

"No."

"Like her father—or her brother?"

"Not particularly—will you honour me with any commands for town? Colonel, have you any? I'm just going off with Major Clay," said Buckhurst.

"Not you, indeed," cried the colonel; "your father has made you over to me, and I won't give you leave of absence, my good fellow. You are under orders for Cheltenham to-morrow, my boy. No reply, sir,—no arguing with your commanding officer. You've no more to do, but to tell Clay to go without you."

"And now," continued the colonel, returning to Godfrey Percy, after Buckhurst had left the room, "what hinders you from making one of our party? You can't do better. There's Maria and Lady Oldborough were both wishing it at breakfast—Maria, can't you say something?"

Maria's eyes said more than the colonel could have said, if he had spoken for ever.

"But perhaps Mr. Godfrey Percy may have other engagements," said she, with a timid persuasive tone, which Godfrey found it extremely difficult to resist.

"Bellamy! where the d—l do you come from? Very glad to see you, faith!" cried the colonel, going forward to shake hands with a very handsome man, who had just then entered the room. "Maria," said Colonel Hauton, turning to his sister, "don't you know Bellamy? —Bellamy," repeated he, coming close to her, while the gentleman was paying his compliments to Lady

Oldborough, "Captain Bellamy, with whom you used to waltz every night, you know at—what's the name of the woman's?"

"I never waltzed with him but once, or twice, that I remember," said Miss Hauton, "and then because you insisted upon it."

"I!—Well, I did very right if I did, because you were keeping all the world waiting, and I knew you intended to do it at last—so I thought you might as well do it at first. But I don't know what's the matter with you this morning—we must drive a little spirit into you at Cheltenham."

Captain Bellamy came up to pay his respects, or rather his compliments, to Miss Hauton: there was no respect in his manner, but the confidence of one who had been accustomed to be well received.

"She has not been well—fainted last night at a ball—is *hipped* this morning; but we'll get her spirits up again when we have her at Cheltenham. We shall be a famous dashing party! I have been beating up for recruits all day—here's one," said Colonel Hauton, turning to Godfrey Percy.

"Excuse me," said Godfrey, "I am engaged—I am obliged to join my regiment immediately." He bowed gravely to Miss Hauton—wished her a good morning; and, without trusting himself to another look, retreated, saying to himself,

> "Sir, she's yours—You have brushed from the grape its soft blue;
> From the rose-bud you've shaken its tremulous dew;
> What you've touched you may take.—Pretty waltzer, adieu!"

From this moment he mentioned Miss Hauton's name no more in his own family. His whole mind now seemed, and not only seemed, but was, full of military thoughts. So quickly in youth do different and opposite trains of ideas and emotions succeed to each other; and so easy it is, by a timely exercise of reason and self-command, to prevent a *fancy* from becoming a passion. Perhaps, if his own happiness alone had been in question, Godfrey might not have shown precisely the same prudence; but on this occasion his generosity and honour assisted his discretion. He plainly saw that Miss Hauton was not exactly a woman whom he could wish to make his wife—and he was too honourable to trifle with her affections. He was not such a

coxcomb as to imagine that, in the course of so slight an acquaintance, he could have made any serious impression on this young lady's heart: yet, he could not but perceive that she had distinguished him from the first hour he was introduced to her; and he was aware that, with her extreme sensibility, and an unoccupied imagination, she might rapidly form for him an attachment that might lead to mutual misery.

Mr. Percy rejoiced in his son's honourable conduct, and he was particularly pleased by Godfrey's determining to join his regiment immediately. Mr. Percy thought it advantageous for the eldest son of a man of fortune to be absent for some years from his home, from his father's estate, tenants, and dependants, to see something of the world, to learn to estimate himself and others, and thus to have means of becoming a really respectable, enlightened, and useful country gentleman—not one of those booby squires, born only to consume the fruits of the earth, who spend their lives in coursing, shooting, hunting, carousing,* "who eat, drink, sleep, die, and rot in oblivion." He thought it in these times the duty of every young heir to serve a few years, that he might be as able as willing to join in the defence of his country, if necessary. Godfrey went, perhaps, beyond his father's ideas upon this subject, for he had an ardent desire to go into the army as a profession, and almost regretted that his being an eldest son might induce him to forego it after a few campaigns.

Godfrey did not enter into the army from the puerile vanity of wearing a red coat and an epaulette; nor to save himself the trouble of pursuing his studies; nor because he thought the army a *good lounge*, or a happy escape from parental control; nor yet did he consider the military profession as a mercenary speculation, in which he was to calculate the chance of getting *into the shoes*, or over the head, of Lieutenant A—— or Captain B——. He had higher objects; he had a noble ambition to distinguish himself. Not in mere technical phrase, or to grace a bumper toast; but, in truth, and as a governing principle of action, he felt zeal for the interests of the service. Yet Godfrey was not without

* See an eloquent address to country gentlemen, in Young's Annals of Agriculture, vol. i, last page

faults; and of these his parents, fond as they were of him, were well aware.

Mrs. Percy, in particular, felt much anxiety when the moment fixed for his departure approached; when she considered that he was now to mix with companions very different from those with whom he had hitherto associated, and to be placed in a situation where calmness of temper and prudence would be more requisite than military courage or generosity of disposition.

"Well, my dear mother," cried Godfrey, when he came to take leave, "fare you well: if I live, I hope I shall distinguish myself; and if I fall—

'How sleep the brave, who sink to rest?'"

"God bless you, my dear son!" said his mother. She seemed to have much more to say, but, unable at that moment to express it, she turned to her husband, who knew all she thought and felt.

"My dear Godfrey," said his father, "I have never troubled you with much advice; but now you are going from me, let me advise you to take care that the same enthusiasm which makes you think your own country the best country upon earth, your own family the best family in that country, and your own regiment the best regiment in the service, all which is becoming a good patriot, a good son, and a good soldier, should go a step—a dangerous step farther, and should degenerate into party-spirit, or what the French call *esprit-de-corps*."

"The French," cried Godfrey. "Oh! hang the French! Never mind what the French call it, sir."

"And degenerating into party spirit, or what is called *esprit-de-corps*," resumed Mr. Percy, smiling, "should, in spite of your more enlarged views of the military art and science, and your knowledge of all that Alexander and Cæsar, and Marshal Saxe and Turenne, and the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Peterborough, ever said or did, persuade you to believe that your brother officers, whoever they may be, are the greatest men that ever existed, and that their opinions should rule the world, or at least should govern you."

"More than all the rest, I fear, my dear Godfrey," interposed Mrs. Percy, "that when you do not find the

world so good as you imagine it to be, you will, by quarrelling with it directly, make it worse to you than it really is. But if you discover that merit is not always immediately rewarded or promoted, do not let your indignation, and—shall I say it?—impatience of spirit, excite you to offend your superiors in station, and, by these means, retard your own advancement."

"Surely, if I should be treated with injustice, you would not have me bear it patiently?" cried Godfrey, turning quickly.

"In the first place, stay till it happens before you take fire," said his father; "and, in the next place, remember that patience, and deference to his superiors, form an indispensable part of a young soldier's merit."

"Ah! my dear," said Mrs. Percy, looking up at her son anxiously, "if even at this instant, even with us, even at the bare imagination of injustice, you take offence, I fear—I very much fear—" said she, laying her hand upon his arm.

"My dearest mother," said Godfrey, in a softened tone, taking his mother's hand in the most respectful and tender manner, "fear nothing for me. I will be as patient as a lamb, rather than be a source of anxiety to you."

"And now, my good friends, fare ye well!" said Godfrey, turning to take leave of his sisters.

The young soldier departed. His last words, as he got upon his horse, were to Caroline. "Caroline, you will be married before I return."

But to descend to the common affairs of life. While all these visits and balls, coquettings, and separations, had been going on, the Dutch carpenters had been repairing the wreck; and from time to time, complaints had been made of them by Mr. Percy's old steward. The careful steward's indignation was first excited by their forgetting every night to lock a certain gate, with the key of which they had been intrusted. Then they had wasted his master's timber, and various tools were missing—they had been twice as long as they ought to have been in finishing their work, and now, when the wind was fair, the whole ship's crew impatient to sail, and not above half a day's work wanting, the carpenters were smoking and drinking, instead of putting their hands to the business. The Dutch carpenter, who was

at this moment more than half-intoxicated, answered the steward's just reproaches with much insolence. Mr. Percy, feeling that his hospitality and good-nature were encroached upon and abused, declared that he would no longer permit the Dutchmen to have the use of his house, and ordered his steward to see that they quitted it immediately.

These men, and all belonging to them, consequently left the place in a few hours; whatever remained to be done to the vessel was finished that evening, and she sailed, to the great joy of her whole crew, and of Mr. Percy's steward, who, when he brought the news of this event to his master, protested that he was as glad as if anybody had given him twenty golden guineas, that he had at last got safely rid of these ill-mannered drunken fellows, who, after all his master had done for them, never so much as said "Thank you," and who had wasted and spoiled more by their carelessness than their heads were worth.

Alas! he little knew at that moment how much more his master was to lose by their carelessness, and he rejoiced too soon at having got *rid* of them.

In the middle of the night the family were alarmed by the cry of fire! A fire had broken out in the out-house which had been lent to the Dutchmen: before it was discovered, the roof was in a blaze; the wind unfortunately blew towards a hay-rick, which was soon in flames, and the burning hay spread the fire to a considerable distance, till it caught the veranda at the east wing of the dwelling-house. One of the servants, who slept in that part of the house, was awakened by the light from the burning veranda, but by the time the alarm was given, and before the family could get out of their rooms, the flames had reached Mr. Percy's study, which contained his most valuable papers. Mr. Percy, whose voice all his family, in the midst of their terror and confusion, obeyed, directed with great presence of mind what should be done by each. He sent one to open a cistern of water at the top of the house, and to let it flow over the roof, another to tear down the trellis next the part that was on fire; others he despatched for barrows full of wet mortar from a heap which was in a back yard near the house; others he stationed in readiness to throw the mortar where it was most needful to extinguish the flames, or to prevent

their communicating with the rest of the building. He went himself to the place where the fire raged with the greatest violence, while his wife and daughters were giving out from the study the valuable papers which, as he directed, were thrown in one heap on the lawn, at a sufficient distance from the house to prevent any danger of their being burnt—most of them were in tin cases that were easily removed—the loose papers and books were put into baskets, and covered with wet blankets, so that the pieces of the burning trellis, which fell upon them as they were carried out, did them no injury. It was wonderful with what silence, order, and despatch this went on, while three females, instead of shrieking and fainting, combined to do what was useful and prudent. In spite of all Mr. Percy's exertions, however, the flames burst in from the burning trellis through one of the windows of the study, before the men could tear down the shutters and architraves, as he had ordered. The fire caught the wood-work, and ran along the book-shelves on one side of the wall with terrible rapidity, so that the whole room was, in a few minutes, in a blaze—they were forced to leave it before they had carried out many of the books. Some old papers remained in the presses, supposed to be duplicates, and of no consequence. This whole wing of the house they were obliged to abandon to the flames, but the fire was stopped in its progress at last, and the principal part of the mansion was preserved by wet mortar, according to Mr. Percy's judicious order, by the prompt obedience, and by the unanimity, of all who assisted.

The next morning the family saw the melancholy spectacle of a heap of ruins in the place of that library which they all loved so much. However, it was their disposition to make the best of misfortunes; instead of deploring what they had lost, they rejoiced in having suffered so little, and saved so much. They particularly rejoiced that no lives had been sacrificed; Mr. Percy declared, that for his own part, he would willingly undergo much greater pecuniary loss, to have had the satisfaction of seeing in all his family so much presence of mind, and so much freedom from selfishness, as they had shown upon this occasion.

When he said something of this sort, before his servants, who were all assembled, it was observed that one

of them, a very old nurse, looked immediately at Caroline, then lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, in silent gratitude. Upon inquiry it appeared, that in the confusion and terror, when the alarm had first been raised, the nurse had been forgotten, or it had been taken for granted that she had gone home to her own cottage the preceding evening.

Caroline, however, recollected her, and ran to her room, which was in the attic story over the library.

When Caroline opened the door she could scarcely see the bed. She made her way to it, however, got old Martha out of the room, and with great difficulty brought the bewildered, decrepit creature safely down a small staircase, which the flames had not then reached. Nothing could exceed her gratitude; with eyes streaming with tears, and a head shaking with strong emotion, she delighted in relating all these circumstances, and declared that none but Miss Caroline could have persuaded her to go down that staircase, when she saw all below in flames.

Mr. Percy's first care was to look over his papers, to see whether any were missing. To his consternation, one valuable deed, a deed by which he held the whole Percy estate, was nowhere to be found. He had particular reason for being alarmed by the loss of this paper. The heir-at-law to this estate had long been lying in wait to make an attack upon him. Aware of this, Mr. Percy took all prudent means to conceal the loss of this paper, and he cautioned his whole family never to mention it.

It happened about this time, that a poor old man, to whom Buckhurst Falconer had given that puppy which his brother John had so bitterly regretted, came to Mr. Percy to complain that the dog had brought him into great trouble. The puppy had grown into a dog, and of this the old man had forgotten to give notice to the tax-gatherer. Mr. Percy, perceiving clearly that the man had no design to defraud, and pitying him for having thus, by his ignorance or carelessness, subjected himself to the heavy penalty of ten pounds, which, without selling his only cow he was unable to pay, advised him to state the simple fact in a petition, and Mr. Percy promised to transmit this petition to government, with a memorial against the tax-gatherer, who had been accused, in many instances, of oppressive and corrupt

conduct. He had hitherto defied all complainants, because he was armed strong in law by an attorney who was his near relation—an attorney of the name of Sharpe, whose cunning and skill in the doubles and mazes of his profession, and whose active and vindictive temper had rendered him the terror of the neighbourhood. Not only the poor but the rich feared him, for he never failed to devise means of revenging himself wherever he was offended. He one morning waited on Mr. Percy, to speak to him about the memorial, which, he understood Mr. Percy was drawing up against Mr. Bates, the tax-gatherer.

"Perhaps, Mr. Percy," said he, "you don't know that Mr. Bates is my near relation?"

Mr. Percy replied that he had not known it; but that, now he did, he could not perceive how that altered the business; as he interfered, not from any private motive, but from a sense of public justice, which made him desire to remove a person from a situation for which he had shown himself utterly unfit.

Mr. Sharpe smiled a malicious smile, and declared that for his part, he did not pretend to be a reformer of abuses: he thought, in the present times, that gentlemen who wished well to their king and the peace of the country ought not to be forward to lend their names to popular discontents, and should not embarrass government with petty complaints. Gentlemen could never foresee where such things would end, and therefore, in the *existing circumstances*, they ought surely to endeavour to strengthen, instead of weakening, the hands of government.

To this commonplace *cant*, by which all sorts of corruption and all public delinquents might be screened, and by which selfishness and fraud hope to pass for loyalty and love of the peace of the country, Mr. Percy did not attempt, or rather did not deign, any reply.

Mr. Sharpe then insinuated that Lord Oldborough, who had put Bates into his present situation, would be displeased by a complaint against him. Mr. Sharpe observed that Lord Oldborough was remarkable for standing steadily by all the persons whom he appointed, and that, if Mr. Percy persisted in this attack, he would probably not find himself thanked by his own relations, the Falconers.

This hint produced no effect: so at last Mr. Sharpe

concluded, by saying, with an air of prodigious legal assurance, that for his own part he was quite at ease about the result of the affair, for he was confident that, when the matter came to be properly inquired into, and the witnesses to be cross-examined, no mal-practices could be brought home to his relation.

Then, Mr. Percy observed, that a memorial praying to have the circumstances inquired into could be no disadvantage to Mr. Bates, but the contrary, as it would tend to prove his innocence publicly, and to remove the prejudice which now subsisted against him. Mr. Percy, who had the memorial at this time in his hand, deliberately folded it up, and directed it.

"Then, sir," cried Mr. Sharpe, put off his guard by anger, "since you are determined to throw away the scabbard, you cannot be surprised if I do the same."

Mr. Percy, smiling, said that he feared no sword but the sword of justice, which could not fall on his head while he was doing what was just. As he spoke, he prepared to seal the memorial.

Mr. Sharpe's habitual caution recurring in the space of a second or two, he begged pardon if zeal for his relation had hurried him into any unbecoming warmth of expression, and stretching out his hand eagerly to stop Mr. Percy, as he was going to press down the seal, "Give me leave, sir," said he, "give me leave to run my eye over that memorial—may I beg, before you seal it."

"And welcome," said Mr. Percy, putting the paper into his hand: "all that I do shall be done openly and fairly."

The attorney took possession of the memorial, and began to con it over. As he was reading it he happened to stand in a recessed window, so that he could not easily be seen by any person who entered the room: at this moment Rosamond came in suddenly, exclaiming, as she held up a huge unfolded parchment, "I've found it!—I've found it, my dear father!—I do believe this is Sir John Percy's deed that was lost!—I always said it was not burnt—What's the matter?—What do you mean?—Nobody can hear me; the outer door is shut—Perhaps this is only a copy.—It is not signed or sealed, but I suppose—"

Here she stopped short, for she saw Mr. Sharpe. She looked so much astounded, that even if he had not

all she had said, her countenance would have
l his curiosity. The attorney had heard every
e she had uttered, and he knew enough of Mr.
s affairs to comprehend the full extent of the ad-
e that might be made of this discovery. He
returned the memorial, acknowledging that it
:awn up with much moderation and ability, but
ing that Mr. Percy should think it necessary to
; and concluding with a few general expressions
regard he had always felt for the family, he took
ve.

is safe!" cried Rosamond, as soon as she heard
ıse door shut after he was gone. "All is safe,
Heaven!—for that man's head was luckily so full
memorial, that he never heard one word I said."
Percy was of a different opinion: he was per-
that the attorney would not neglect so fine an
ınity of revenge. Sharpe had formerly been em-
in suits of Sir Robert Percy, the heir-at-law.
ras now the promise of a lawsuit, that would at
nts put a great deal of money into the pockets
lawyers, and a considerable gratuity would be
d to the person who should first inform Sir Robert
loss of the important conveyance.

Percy's opinion of the revengeful nature of Sharpe,
perception that he was in the solicitor's power,
, however, make any change in his resolution
he memorial. It was sent, and Bates was turned
his office. For some time nothing more was
of Mr. Sharpe. Mr. Percy, for many months
ırd, was busied in rebuilding that part of his
vhich had been destroyed by the fire; and as he
ıturally of a sanguine temper, little inclined to
himself with cabals and quarrels, the transaction
ning Bates, and even the attorney's threat of
ng away the scabbard, passed from his mind.
nily pursued the happy tenor of their lives, with-
nembering that there was such a being as Mr.
or Sharpe.

CHAPTER VI.

At the time of the fire at Percy-hall, a painted glass window in the passage—we should say the gallery—leading to the study, had been destroyed. Old Martha, whose life Caroline had saved, had a son, who possessed some talents as a painter, and who had learned the art of painting on glass. He had been early in his life assisted by the Percy family, and, desirous to offer some small testimony of his gratitude, he begged permission to paint a new window for the gallery. He chose for his subject the fire, and the moment when Caroline was assisting his decrepit mother down the dangerous staircase. The painting was finished unknown to Caroline, and put up on her birth-day, when she had just attained her eighteenth year. This was the only circumstance worth recording which the biographer can find noted in the family annals at this period. In this dearth of events, may we take the liberty of introducing, according to the fashion of modern biography, a few private letters? They are written by persons of whom the reader as yet knows nothing—Mr. Percy's second and third sons, Alfred and Erasmus. Alfred was a barrister; Erasmus a physician; they were both at this time in London, just commencing their professional career. Their characters—but let their characters speak for themselves in their letters, else neither their letters nor their characters can be worth attention.

ALFRED PERCY TO HIS FATHER.

"My dear Father,

"Thank you for the books—I have been reading hard lately, for I have still, alas! leisure enough to read. I cannot expect to be employed, or to have *fees* for some time to come. I am armed with patience—I am told that I have got through the worst part of my profession, the reading of dry law. This is tiresome enough, to be

sure; but I think the courting of attorneys and solicitors is the worst part of the beginning of my profession: for this I was not, and I believe I never shall be, sufficiently prepared. I give them no dinners, and they neglect me; yet I hope I pay them proper attention. To make amends, however, I have been so fortunate as to form acquaintance with some gentlemen of the bar, who possess enlarged minds and general knowledge: their conversation is of the greatest use and pleasure to me. But many barristers here are men who live entirely among themselves, with their heads in their green bags, and their souls narrowed to a point: mere machines for drawing pleas and rejoinders.

"I remember Burke asserts (and I was once, with true professional party-spirit, angry with him for the assertion) that the study of the law has a contractile power on the mind: I am now convinced it has, from what I see, and what I feel; therefore I will do all I can to counteract this contraction by the expansive force of literature. I lose no opportunity of making acquaintance with literary men, and cultivating their society. The other day, at Hookham's library, I met with a man of considerable talents—a Mr. Temple: he was looking for a passage in the life of the lord-keeper Guilford, which I happened to know. This brought us into a conversation, with which we were mutually so well pleased, that we agreed to dine together, for further information—and we soon knew all that was to be known of each other's history.

"Temple is of a very good family, though the younger son of a younger brother. He was brought up by his grandfather, with whom he was a favourite. Accustomed, from his childhood, to live with the rich and great, to see a grand establishment, to be waited upon, to have servants, horses, carriages at his command, and always to consider himself as a part of a family who possessed every thing they could wish for in life; he says, he almost forgot, or rather never thought of the time when he was to have nothing, and when he should be obliged to provide entirely for himself. Fortunately for him, his grandfather, having early discerned that he had considerable talents, determined that he should have all the advantages of education, which he thought would prepare him to shine in parliament. His grandfather, however, died when Temple was yet scarcely eighteen.

He had put off writing a codicil to his will, by which Temple lost the provision intended for him. All hopes of being brought into parliament were over. His uncle, who succeeded to the estate, had sons of his own. There were family jealousies, and young Temple, as having been a favourite, was disliked. Promises were made by other relations, and by former friends, and by these he was amused and misled for some time, but he found he was only wasting his life, attending upon these great relations. The unkindness and falsehood of some, and the haughty neglect of others, hurt his high spirit, and roused his strong indignation. He, in his turn, neglected and offended, was cast off at last, or forgotten by most of the fine promisers. At which, he says, he has had reason to rejoice, for this threw him upon his own resources, and made him exert his own mind. He applied, in earnest, to prepare himself for the profession for which he was best fitted, and went to the bar. Now comes the part of his history for which he, with reason, blames himself. He was disgusted, not so much by the labour, as by the many disagreeable circumstances, which necessarily occur in the beginning of a barrister's course. He could not bear the waiting in the courts, or on circuit, without business, without notice. He thought his merit would never make its way, and was provoked by seeing two or three stupid fellows pushed on by solicitors, or helped up by judges. He had so much knowledge, talent, and eloquence, that he must in time have made a great figure, and would, undoubtedly, have risen to the first dignities, had he persevered, but he sacrificed himself to pique and impatience. He quitted the bar, and the very summer after he had left it, the illness of a senior counsel on that circuit afforded an opportunity where Temple would have been called upon, and where he could fully have displayed his talents. Once known, such a man would have been always distinguished. He now bitterly regrets that he abandoned his profession. This imprudence gave his friends a fair excuse for casting him off; but, he says, their neglect grieves him not, for he had resolved never more to trust to their promises, or to stoop to apply to them for patronage. He has been these last two years in an obscure garret writing for bread. He says, however, that he is sure he is happier, even in this situation, than are some of his cousins at

this instant, who are struggling in poverty to be genteel, or to keep up a family name, and he would not change places with those who are in a state of idle and opprobrious dependence. I understand (remember, this is a secret between ourselves)—I understand that *Secretary* Cunningham Falconer has found him out, and makes *good use of his pen*, but pays him shabbily. Temple is too much of a man of honour to *peach*. So Lord Oldborough knows nothing of the matter; and Cunningham gets half his business done, and supplies all his deficiencies, by means of this poor drudging genius. Perhaps I have tired you with this history of my new friend; but he has interested me extremely: he has faults, certainly, perhaps too high a spirit, too much sensibility; but he has such strict integrity, so much generosity of mind, and something so engaging in his manners, that I cannot help loving, admiring, and pitying him—that last sentiment, however, I am obliged to conceal, for he would not bear it.

"I see very little of Erasmus. He has been in the country this fortnight with some patient. I long for his return.—I will make the inquiries you desire about Buckhurst Falconer.

"Your affectionate son,

"ALFRED PERCY.

"P.S.—Yes, my dear Rosamond, I *shall* be obliged to you for the flower-roots for my landlady's daughter."

LETTER FROM ERASMUS TO HIS FATHER.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"Pray do not feel disappointed when I tell you that I I am not getting on quite so fast as I expected. I assure you, however, that I have not neglected any honourable means of bringing myself into notice. But it is very difficult for a young man to rise without puffing, or using low means.

"I met Lady Jane Granville a few days ago. She gave me a note to Sir Amyas Courtney, a fashionable physician, and a great favourite of hers. She told me that he had formerly been acquainted with some of my family, and she so strongly urged me to wait upon him, that to avoid offending her ladyship, I promised to avail myself of her introduction.

"I called several times before I found Sir Amyas at home. At last, by appointment, I went to breakfast with him one morning, when he was confined to the house by an *influenza*. He received me in the most courteous manner—recollected to have danced with my mother years ago, at a ball at Lord Somebody's—professed the greatest respect for the name of Percy—asked me various questions about my grandfather, which I could not answer, and paid you more compliments than I can remember. Sir Amyas is certainly the prettiest behaved physician breathing, with the sweetest assortment of tittle-tattle, with an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes and compliments for the great, and an intimate acquaintance with the fair and fashionable. He has also the happiest art of speaking a vast deal, and yet saying nothing; seeming to give an opinion, without ever committing himself. The address with which he avoids contested points of science, and the art with which he displays his superficial knowledge, and conceals his want of depth, is truly amusing. He slid away from science as soon as he could, to politics, where he kept safe in commonplace newspaper-phrases; and in the happy persuasion that every thing is for the best, and that every man in power, let him be of what party he may, can do no wrong. He did not seem quite satisfied with my countenance as he spoke, and once or twice paused for my acquiescence—in vain.

"We were interrupted by the entrance of a Mr. Gresham, a rich merchant, who came to look at a picture which Sir Amyas shows as a true Titian. Mr. Gresham spoke, as I thought, with much good sense and taste about it, and Sir Amyas talked a great deal of amateur nonsense. Still in the same namby-pamby style, and with the same soft voice and sweet smile, Sir Amyas talked on of pictures and battles, and carnage and levees, and drawing-rooms and balls, and butterflies. He has a museum for the ladies, and he took me to look at it—Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day! Among his shells was one upon which he peculiarly prided himself, and which he showed me as a unique. I was, I assure you, prudently silent till he pressed for my opinion, and then I could not avoid confessing that I suspected it to be a *made* shell—*made*, Caroline knows how, by the application of acids. The countenance of Sir Amyas clouded over, and I saw that I at this mo-

ment lost all chance of his future favour. He made me some fine speeches, when I was going away, and dwelt upon his great desire to oblige any friend of Lady Jane Granville's.

"A few days afterward I saw her ladyship again, and found by her manner that she had not been satisfied by Sir Amyas Courtney's report of me. She pressed me to tell her all that had passed between us. She was provoked by my imprudence, as she called it, about the shell, and exhorted me to repair it by future attentions and complaisance. When I declined paying court to Sir Amyas, as inconsistent with my ideas and feelings of independence, her ladyship grew angry—said that my father had inspired all his sons with absurd notions of independence, which would prevent their rising in the world, or succeeding in any profession. I believe I then grew warm in defence of my father and myself. The conclusion of the whole was, that we remained of our own opinions, and that her ladyship protested she would never more attempt to serve us. Alfred has called since on Lady Jane, but has not been admitted. I am sorry that I too have offended her, for I really like her, and am grateful for her kindness, but I cannot court her patronage, nor bend to her idol, Sir Amyas.

* * * * * * *

"Your affectionate son,
"Erasmus Percy."

LETTER FROM ERASMUS PERCY TO HIS FATHER.

"My dear Father,

"I told you in my last how I lost all hopes of favour from Sir Amyas Courtney, and how determined I was not to bend to him. On some occasion soon afterward this determination appeared, and recommended me immediately to the notice of a certain Dr. Frumpton, who is the antagonist and sworn foe to Sir Amyas. Do you know who Dr. Frumpton is—and who he was—and how he has risen to his present height?

"He was a farrier in a remote county; he began by persuading the country people in his neighbourhood that he had a specific for the bite of a mad dog.

"It happened that he cured an old dowager's favourite waiting-maid, who had been bitten by a cross

lap-dog, which her servants pronounced to be mad, that they might have an excuse for hanging it.

"The fame of this cure was spread by the dowager among her numerous acquaintance in town and country.

"Then he took agues—and afterward scrofula under his protection; patronised by his old dowager—and lucky in some of his desperate quackery, Dr. Frumpton's reputation rapidly increased, and from different counties fools came to consult him. His manners were bearish even to persons of quality who resorted to his den; but these brutal manners *imposed* upon many, heightened the idea of his confidence in himself, and commanded the submission of the timid. His tone grew higher and higher, and he more and more easily bullied the credulity of man and woman-kind.—It seems that either extreme of soft and polished, or of rough and brutal manner can succeed with certain physicians. *Dr.* Frumpton's name, and Dr. Frumpton's wonderful cures, were in every newspaper, and in every shop-window. No man ever puffed himself better even in this puffing age. His success was viewed with scornful yet with jealous eyes by the regular bred physicians, and they did all they could to keep him down—Sir Amyas Courtney in particular, who would never call him any thing but *that farrier*, making what noise he could about Frumpton's practising without a diploma. In pure spite, Frumpton took to learning—late as it was, he put himself to school—with virulent zeal he read and *crammed* till, Heaven knows how! he accomplished getting a diploma—stood all prescribed examinations, and has grinned defiance ever since at Sir Amyas.

"Frumpton, delighted with the story of the *made shell*, and conceiving me to be the enemy of his enemy, resolved, as he declared, to take me by the hand; and, such is the magical deception of self-love, that his apparent friendliness towards me made him appear quite agreeable, and notwithstanding all that I had heard and known of him, I fancied his brutality was frankness, and his presumption strength of character. I gave him credit especially for a happy instinct for true merit, and an honourable antipathy to flattery and meanness. The manner in which he pronounced the words, *fawning puppy!* applied to Sir Amyas Courtney, pleased me peculiarly—and I had just exalted Frumpton into a

great man, and an original genius, when he fell flat to the level, and below the level, of common mortals.

"It happened, as I was walking home with him, we were stopped in the street by a crowd, which had gathered round a poor man, who had fallen from a scaffold, and had broken his leg. Dr. Frumpton immediately said, 'Send for Bland, the surgeon, who lives at the corner of the street.' The poor man was carried into a shop; we followed him. I found that his leg, besides being broken, was terribly bruised and cut. The surgeon in a few minutes arrived. Mr. Bland, it seems, is a *protégé* of Frumpton's, who formerly practised human farriery under him.

"Mr. Bland, after slightly looking at it, said, 'The leg must come off, the sooner the better.' The man, perceiving that I pitied him, cast such a beseeching look at me, as made me interpose, impertinently perhaps, but I could not resist it. I forget what I said; but I know the sense of it was, that I thought the poor fellow's leg could and ought to be saved. I remember Dr. Frumpton glared upon me instantly with eyes of fury, and asked how I dared to interfere in a surgical case; and to contradict his friend, Mr. Bland, a surgeon!

"They prepared for the operation; the surgeon whipped on his mittens—the poor man, who was almost fainting with loss of blood, cast another piteous look at me, and said, in an Irish accent, 'Long life to you, dear!—and don't let 'em—for what will I be without a leg! And my wife and children!'

"He fell back in a swoon, and I sprang between the surgeon and him; insisting that, as he had appealed to me, he should be left to me; and declared that I would have him carried to St. George's hospital, where I knew he would be taken care of properly.

"Frumpton stamped, and, scarcely articulate with rage, bade me—'Stir the man at your peril!' adding expressions injurious to the hospital, with the governors of which he had some quarrel. I made a sign to the workmen who had brought in the wounded man; they lifted him instantly, and carried him out before me; and one of them, being his countryman, followed, crying aloud, '*Success* to your honour! and may you *never* want a *friend!*'

"Frumpton seized him by both shoulders, and pushing

him out of the house, exclaimed, 'Success, by G—, he shall never have, if I can help it! He has lost a friend such as he can never get again. By G—, I'll make him repent this!'

"Unmoved by these denunciations, I pursued my way to the hospital. You know in what an admirable manner the London hospitals are conducted. At St. George's this poor man was received, and attended with the greatest care and skill. The surgeon who has taken charge of him assures me that his leg will, a month hence, be as useful as any leg in London.

"Dr. Frumpton and Mr. Bland have, I find, loudly complained of my interference, as contrary to all medical etiquette—*Etiquette!*—from Frumpton!—The story has been told with many exaggerations, and always to my disadvantage. I cannot, however, repent. Let me lose what I may, I am satisfied with the pleasure of seeing the poor man in a way to do well. Pray let me hear from you, my dear father, and say, if you can, that you think me right—Thank Caroline for her letter. * *

"Your affectionate

"Erasmus Percy."

LETTER FROM ALFRED.

"My dear Father,—I have made all possible inquiries about Buckhurst Falconer. He staid at Cheltenham till about a month ago, with the Hautons, and I hear attended Miss Hauton everywhere; but I do not think there is any reason to believe the report of his paying his addresses to her. The public attention he showed her was, in my opinion, designed only to pique Caroline, whom, I'm persuaded, he thinks (between the fits of half a dozen other fancies) the first of women—as he always calls her. Rosamond need not waste much pity on him. He is an out-of-sight-out-of-mind man. The pleasure of the present moment is all in all with him. He has many good points in his disposition; but Caroline had penetration enough to see that his character would never suit hers; and I rejoice that she gave him a decided refusal.

"Since he came to town, he has, by his convivial powers, his good stories, good songs, and knack of mimicry, made himself so *famous*, that he has more

invitations to dinner than he can accept. He has wit and talents fit for more than being the buffoon or mocking-bird of a good dinner and a pleasant party; but he seems so well contented with this *réputation de salon*, that I am afraid his ambition will not rise to any thing higher. After leading this idle life, and enjoying this cheap-earned praise, he will never submit to the seclusion and application necessary for the attainment of the great prizes of professional excellence. I doubt whether he will even persevere so far as to be called to the bar; though the other day, when I met him in Bond-street, he assured me, and bade me assure you, that he is getting on *famously*, and eating his terms with a prodigious appetite. He seemed heartily glad to see me, and expressed warm gratitude for your having saved his conscience, and having prevented his father from forcing him, as he said, to be a disgrace to the church.

"Rosamond asks what sort of girls the Miss Falconers are, and whether the Falconers have been civil to me since I settled in town?—Yes; pretty well. The girls are mere *show* girls—like a myriad of others—sing, play, dance, dress, flirt, and *all that*. Georgiana is *beautiful sometimes;* Arabella, *ugly always*. I don't like either of them, and they don't like me, for I am not an eldest son. The mother was prodigiously pleased with me at first, because she mistook me for Godfrey, or rather she mistook me for the heir of our branch of the Percys. I hear that Mrs. Falconer has infinite address, both as a political and hymeneal *intrigante:* but I have not time to study her. Altogether, the family, though they live in constant gayety, do not give me the idea of being happy among one another. I have no particular reason for saying this. I judge only from the tact on this subject which I have acquired from my own happy experience.

"Love to Rosamond—I am afraid she will think I have been too severe upon Buckhurst Falconer. I know he is a favourite, at least a *protégé* of hers and of Godfrey. Bid her remember I have acknowledged that he has talents and generosity; but that which interests Rosamond in his favour inclines ill-natured me against him—his being one of Caroline's suitors. I think he has great assurance to continue, in spite of all repulse, to hope, especially as he does nothing to render himself more worthy of encouragement. Thank Caroline for

her letter; and assure Rosamond, that, though I have never noticed it, I was grateful for her entertaining account of M. de Tourville's *vis.*: I confess, I am rather late with my acknowledgments; but the fire at Percy-hall, and many events which rapidly succeeded, put that whole affair out of my head. Moreover, the story of Euphrosyne and Count Albert was so squeezed under the seal, that I must beg notes of explanation in her next. Who the deuse is Euphrosyne? and what does the letter P—for the rest of the word was torn out—stand for? and is Count Albert a hero in a novel, or a real live man?

"I saw a live man yesterday, whom I did not at all like to see—Sharpe, walking with our *good* cousin Sir Robert Percy, in close conversation. This conjunction, I fear, bodes us no good.—Pray, do pray make another search for *the deed*.

"Your affectionate son,
"ALFRED PERCY."

Soon after this letter had been received, and while the picture of his life and the portraits of his worthy companions were yet fresh in her view, Buckhurst Falconer took the unhappy moment to write to renew his declaration of passionate attachment to Caroline, and to beg to be permitted to wait upon her once more.

From the indignant blush which mounted in Caroline's face on reading his letter, Rosamond saw how unlikely it was that this request should be granted. It came, indeed, at an unlucky time. Rosamond could not refrain from a few words of apology, and looks of commiseration for Buckhurst; yet she entirely approved of Caroline's answer to his letter, and the steady repetition of her refusal, and even of the strengthened terms in which it was now expressed. Rosamond was always prudent for her friends, when it came to any serious point where their interests or happiness were concerned. Her affection for her friends, and her fear of doing wrong on such occasions, awakened her judgment, and so controlled her imagination, that she then proved herself uncommonly judicious and discreet.—Prudence had not, it is true, been a part of Rosamond's character in childhood; but in the course of her education, a considerable portion of it had been infused by a very careful and skilful hand. Perhaps it had never completely assimi-

lated with the original composition: sometimes the prudence fell to the bottom, sometimes was shaken to the top, according to the agitation or tranquillity of her mind; sometimes it was so faintly visible that its existence might be doubted by the hasty observer; but when put to a proper test it never failed to reappear in full force. After any effort of discretion in conduct, Rosamond, however, often relieved and amused herself by talking in favour of the imprudent side of the question.

"You have decided prudently, my dear Caroline, I acknowledge," said she. "But now your letter is fairly gone—now that it is all over, and that we are safe—I begin to think you are a little too prudent for your age. Bless me, Caroline, if you are so prudent at eighteen, what will you be at thirty? Beware!—and in the mean time you will never be a heroine—what a stupid, uninteresting heroine you will make! You will never get into any *entanglements*, never have any adventures; or, if kind Fate should, propitious to my prayer, bring you into some charming difficulties, even then we could not tremble for you, or enjoy all the luxury of pity, because we should always know that you would be so well able to extricate yourself—so certain to conquer, or—not die, but—endure. Recollect that Doctor Johnson, when his learned sock was off, confessed that he could never be thoroughly interested for Clarissa, because he knew that her prudence would always be equal to every occasion."

Mrs. Percy began to question whether Johnson had ever expressed this sentiment seriously; she reprobated the cruelty of *friendly* biographers, who publish every light expression that escapes from celebrated lips in private conversation; she was going to have added a word or two about the injury done to the public, to young people especially, by the spreading such rash dogmas under the sanction of a great name.

But Rosamond did not give her mother time to enforce this moral; she went on rapidly with her own thoughts.

"Caroline, my dear," continued she, "you shall not be my heroine; you are too well proportioned for a heroine—in mind, I mean. A heroine may—*must* have a finely-proportioned person, but never a well-proportioned mind. All her virtues must be larger than the life; all her passions those of a tragedy queen. Pro-

duce—only dare to produce—one of your reasonable wives, mothers, daughters, or sisters on the theatre, and you would see them hissed off the stage. Good people are acknowledged to be the bane of the drama and the novel. I never wish to see a reasonable woman on the stage, or an unreasonable woman off it. I have the greatest sympathy and admiration for your true heroine in a book; but I grant you that in real life, in a private room, the tragedy queen would be too much for me; and the novel heroine would be the most useless, troublesome, affected, haranguing, egotistical, insufferable being imaginable! So, my dear Caroline, I am content that you are my sister and my friend, though I give you up as a heroine."

CHAPTER VII.

LETTER FROM GODFREY PERCY TO MRS. PERCY.

"London, the British Hotel.

"You will be surprised, my dear mother, to find that I am in London, instead of being, as I had hoped I should have been by this time, with the army on the Continent. Just as we were going to embark we were countermanded, and ordered to stay at our quarters. Conceive our disappointment—to remain in garrison at the most stupid, idle country-town in England.

"You ask how I like my brother-officers, and what sort of men they are?—Major Gascoigne, son to my father's friend, I like extremely; he is a man of a liberal spirit, much information, and zeal for the army. But what I particularly admire in him is his candour. He says it is his own fault that he is not higher in the army—that when he was a very young man he was of too unbending a temper—mistook bluntness for sincerity—did not treat his superior officer with proper deference—lost a good friend by it.

"A fine lesson for me! and the better, because not intended.

"Next to Gascoigne I like Captain Henry: a young man of my own age, uncommonly handsome, but quite

free from conceit. There is something in his manners so gentlemanlike, and he is of so frank a disposition, that I was immediately prepossessed in his favour. I don't like him the worse for having a tinge of proper pride, especially in the circumstances in which he is placed. I understand that it is suspected he is not of a good family; but I am not impertinent enough to inquire into particulars. I have been told that when he first came into the regiment some of the officers wanted to make out what family he belongs to, and whether he is or is not one of the Irish Henrys. They showed their curiosity in an unwarrantable manner; and Henry, who has great feeling, and a spirit as quick to resent injury as to be won by kindness, was going to call one of these gentlemen to account for their impertinence. He would have had half a dozen duels upon his hands if Gascoigne had not settled them. I have not time to tell you the whole story; but it is enough to say, that Major Gascoigne showed great address and prudence, as well as steadiness; and you would all love Captain Henry for his gratitude—he thinks Gascoigne a demigod.

"The rest of my brother-officers are nothing supernatural—just what you may call mere red-coats; some of them fond of high play, others fond of drinking: so I have formed no intimacy but with Gascoigne and Henry. My father will see that I do not *yet* think that the officers of my own mess must all be the first men in the universe.

"Love to all at home. I hope we shall sail soon, and I hope Rosamond will give me credit for the length of this letter. She cannot say, with all her malice, that my lines are at *hooting distance*, or that my words are stretched out like a lawyer's—two good pages, count what way you will!—and from Godfrey, who is not a letter-writer, as Alfred is!—Two good pages, did I say?—why, here's the best part of a third for you, if you allow me to be,

"My dear mother,
"With much respect,
"Your dutiful, obedient,
"And affectionate son,
"GODFREY PERCY."

While Godfrey remained at quarters in this most idle and stupid of country towns, some circumstances oc-

curred in the regiment which put his prudence to trial, and, sooner than he expected, called upon him for the exercise of that spirit of forbearance and temper which he had promised his mother he would show. It was the more difficult to him to keep his temper, because it was an affair which touched the interest of his friend Major Gascoigne. The lieutenant-colonel of the regiment having been promoted, Major Gascoigne had reasonable expectations of succeeding him; but, to his disappointment, a younger man than himself, and a stranger to the regiment, was put over his head. It was said that this appointment was made in consequence of the new colonel being a nephew of Lord Skreene, and of his also having it in his power to command two votes in parliament.

For the truth of this story we cannot pretend to vouch. But the credit the report gained in the regiment created great discontents, which the behaviour of the new lieutenant-colonel unfortunately was not calculated to dissipate. He certainly did not bear his honours meekly, but, on the contrary, gave himself airs of authority, and played the martinet to a useless and ridiculous degree. This, from a mere *parade-officer*, who had never been out of London, to a man like the major—who had seen service and could show wounds—was, to use the mildest expression, ill-judged. Captain Henry said it was *intolerable*—and Godfrey thought so.

Every parade-day something unpleasant occurred, and, when it was talked over, some of the officers took part with Gascoigne, and some with the lieutenant-colonel—very few, however, with the latter—only those who wanted to *keep in* favour: officers in quarters, as these were, had not much to do; therefore they had the more time for disputes, which became of more and more consequence every hour. Major Gascoigne behaved incomparably well, never failing in respect towards his superior officer when he was present, and when he was absent doing all that was possible to restrain the imprudent zeal and indignation of his young friends.

One day, when Godfrey, Captain Henry, and Major Gascoigne were together, the major actually knelt down to Henry to prevail upon him to give up a mad design of challenging his colonel.

That very day, not an hour afterward, the lieutenant-

colonel took occasion to thwart the major about some circumstance of no consequence. Godfrey's blood boiled in his veins—his promise to his mother, that he would be as gentle as a lamb, he recollected at this instant. With difficulty he restrained himself—still his blood boiled. Major Gascoigne's fear that Godfrey and Henry should embroil themselves for his sake increased; for he saw what passed in their hearts, and he had no peace of mind by day, or rest by night.

Generous people are, of all others, the most touched by generosity, either of feeling or action. In this state of irritation, it was not possible that things should long go on without coming to a crisis. Major Gascoigne proposed, as the measure that would be most likely to restore and preserve peace, to quit the regiment. It was a great sacrifice on his part, and, at first, none of his friends would consent to his making it; but, at last, he brought them all to acknowledge that it was, upon the whole, the best thing that could be done. Gascoigne had a friend, a major, in another regiment then in England, who was willing to make an exchange with him, and he thought that the business could be arranged without much difficulty. However, from caprice, the love of showing his power, or from some unknown reason, the lieutenant-colonel made it his pleasure to oppose the exchange, and said that it could not be done; though, as Captain Henry said, everybody knew, that by his writing a line to Lord Skreene it would have been accomplished directly. It now recurred to Godfrey, that Cunningham Falconer, being secretary to Lord Oldborough, might be of use in this affair. Cunningham had always professed the greatest regard for Godfrey, and he was determined, at least, to make this trial of his sincerity.

The secretary sent a civil answer in an official style, explaining *that his office was not the war office*; concluding by an assurance, that if Captain Percy could point out how he could do so with propriety, nothing could give Mr. C. Falconer greater pleasure than to have an opportunity of obliging him.

Now Captain Percy, having a sort of generous good faith about him, believed this last assurance; fancied that as he was no great writer, he had not explained himself well by letter, and that he should make Cunningham understand him better *viva voce*. Keeping his own counsel, and telling only Major Gascoigne and

Captain Henry his object, he asked for a fortnight's leave of absence, and, with some difficulty, obtained it. He went to London, waited on Secretary Falconer, and found him ten times more *official* in his style of conversation than in his letters. Godfrey recollected that his cousin Cunningham had always been solemnly inclined, but now he found him grown so mysterious, that he could scarcely obtain a plain answer to the simplest question. "The whole man, head and heart, seemed," as Godfrey said, "to be diplomatically closed." It was clear, from the little that Cunningham did articulate, that he would do nothing in furthering the exchange desired for Major Gascoigne; but whether this arose from his having no influence with Lord Oldborough, or from his fear of wearing it out, our young officer could not determine. He left the secretary in disgust and despair, and went to wait on Commissioner Falconer, who gave him a polite invitation to dinner, and overwhelmed him with professions of friendship; but, as soon as Godfrey explained his business, the commissioner protested that he could not venture to speak to Lord Oldborough on such an affair, and he earnestly advised him not to interest himself so much for Major Gascoigne, who, though doubtless a very deserving officer, was, in fact, nothing more. He next had recourse to Buckhurst Falconer, and asked him to persuade Colonel Hauton to speak to his uncle upon the subject. This Buckhurst immediately promised to do, and kept his promise. But Colonel Hauton swore that his uncle never, on any occasion, listened to his representations; therefore it was quite useless to speak to him. After wandering from office to office, wasting hour after hour, and day after day, waiting for people who did him no good when he did see them, Godfrey at last determined to do what he should have done at first—apply to Lord Oldborough. It is always better to deal with principals than with secondaries. Lord Oldborough had the reputation of being inaccessible, haughty, and peremptory in the extreme; the secretaries, clerks, and under-clerks "trembled at his name, each under each, through all their ranks of venality." But, to Captain Percy's surprise, the moment his name was announced, the minister immediately recognised him, and received him most graciously. His lordship inquired after his old friend, Mr. Percy—said that Mr. Percy was one of the few really

independent men he had ever known. "Mr. Percy is an excellent country-gentleman, and, for England's sake, I wish there were many, many more such. Now, sir, how can I serve his son?"

With frankness and brevity which suited the minister and the man, Godfrey told his business, and Lord Oldborough, with laconic decision, equally pleasing to the young soldier, replied, "that if it was possible, the thing should be done for Major Gascoigne"—inquired how long Captain Percy purposed to stay in town—desired to see him the day before he should leave London, and named the hour.

All the diplomacy of Cunningham Falconer's face could not disguise his astonishment when he saw the manner in which his master treated Godfrey. The next day the commissioner invited Captain Percy in a pressing manner to dine with him.

"We shall have a very pleasant party," said Mr. Falconer, "and Mrs. Falconer insists upon the pleasure of your company—you have never seen my girls since they were children—your own near relations!—you must be better acquainted: come—I will take no denial."

Godfrey willingly accepted the invitation: he would, *perhaps*, have found means to have excused himself, had he known whom he was to meet at this dinner—Miss Hauton—the dangerous fair one, whom he had resolved to avoid. But he was in the room with her, and beyond all power of receding, before he knew his peril. The young lady looked more beautiful than ever, and more melancholy. One of the Miss Falconers took an opportunity of telling him, in confidence, the cause of her poor friend's dejection. "Her uncle, Lord Oldborough, wants to marry her to the Marquis of Twickenham, the eldest son of the Duke of Greenwich, and Miss Hauton can't endure him."

The marquis was also at this dinner—Godfrey did not much wonder at the lady's dislike; for he was a mean, peevish-looking man, had no conversation, and appeared to be fond of drinking.

"But Lord Oldborough, who is all for ambition," whispered Miss Falconer, "and who maintains that there is no such thing as love, except in novels, says, that his niece may read foolish novels after marriage as

well as before, if she pleases, but that she must marry like a reasonable woman."

Godfrey pitied her; and, while he was pitying, Mrs. Falconer arranged a party for the opera for this night, in which Godfrey found himself included. Perhaps he was imprudent; but he was a young man, and human nature is—human nature.

At the opera Godfrey felt his danger increase every moment. Miss Hauton was particularly engaging, and many circumstances conspired to flatter his vanity, and to interest him for this fair victim of ambition. Her marquis was in the box, smelling of claret, and paying his *devoirs* to his intended bride, apparently very little to her satisfaction. Commissioner Falconer, leaning forward, complimented Miss Hauton upon her appearance this night, and observed that though it was a new opera, all fashionable eyes were turned from the stage to Lady Oldborough's box.

Miss Hauton smiled civilly upon the commissioner, then turning to Godfrey, in a low soft voice repeated—

"And ev'n when fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy."

Godfrey was touched—she saw it, and sighed. A short time afterward her marquis left the box. Miss Hauton recovered from her languor, and became animated in conversation with Godfrey. He felt the whole power of her charms, the immediate force of the temptation; but he recollected who she was—he recollected that she had not shown any instances of discretion which could redeem her from the consequences of a mother's disgrace: the songs he had heard from Miss Hauton's lips, Captain Bellamy and the *waltzing*, came full upon his mind.

"No," said he to himself, "as a wife I cannot think of her: were the Marquis of Twickenham out of the question, my wife she cannot be. Then honour forbids me to trifle with her affections merely to gratify my vanity or the feelings of the moment."

Captain Percy well knew that some men can satisfy their consciences by calling a certain sort of treachery by the soft name of gallantry. He was aware that he could, like many others in similar circumstances, deceive

by equivocal looks and expressions, and then throw the blame from themselves, by asking why the woman was such a fool as to believe,—protesting that they never had a thought of her, and swearing that they had not the least idea she had ever understood them to mean any thing serious; but Godfrey had too much good feeling and good principle to follow such examples.

Miss Hauton had a copy of the new opera before her, and as she turned over the leaves, she pointed out to him the passages that she liked. Some were peculiarly applicable to her own situation, representing a heroine forced to marry a man she hates, while she tenderly loves another. Godfrey could not, or would not, understand the Italian. It was perfectly well explained to him; and then, perceiving the applications made of certain lines by Miss Hauton's voice and eyes, he had no resource but in a new singer, to whom he became suddenly so attentive that nothing could distract him from the stage. When the actress ceased to sing, he found means to engage the Miss Falconers in a discussion of her merits, which, with all the nonsense and compliments to their taste the occasion required, filled up the dangerous interval till the opera was over; then—more dangerous still—waiting for carriages in *the crush room*; but through all these perils Godfrey passed so dexterously, as to leave Miss Hauton in doubt whether she had been understood or not. Thus he hoped that her conscience would in future, if she should ever after her marriage reflect on the opera of this night, be as much at ease as his own—though perhaps not with so good reason.

After this night, Godfrey would not expose himself to a repetition of similar danger; and that he might avoid meeting this fair lady again, he refused two invitations from Mrs. Falconer to a ball at her house, and to a musical party. This deserves to be recorded to his credit, because he was very fond both of music and dancing.

The day before he was to leave town, at the hour and minute appointed, Godfrey waited upon Lord Oldborough; but not such his reception now as it had been on his first visit to this minister: he was kept two hours waiting alone in an antechamber. At last the cabinet door opened, and Lord Oldborough appeared with a dark cold countenance, and a haughty stiffness in his whole frame. His

lordship walked deliberately forward, till he came within a yard of our young officer, and then, without speaking, bent his head and body slowly, and so remained as if waiting to be informed who Captain Percy was, and what his business might be. Astonishment, and offended pride, flashed successively in Godfrey's countenance. Lord Oldborough, after fixing his interrogating eyes upon him ineffectually, receiving no explanation, seemed to come a little to his recollection, and condescended to say, "Captain Percy, I believe!—your commands with me, Captain Percy."

"My lord, I have the honour to be here by your lordship's appointment on Major Gascoigne's business."

"Sir, you had a note from me yesterday, I believe, which contained all that I have it in my power to say on Major Gascoigne's business."

"Pardon me, my lord—I never had the honour of receiving any note from your lordship."

"Very extraordinary! I sent it by my own man. You are at Batts's Hotel, sir?"

"No, my lord, at the British Hotel."

"Ha!—that is the cause of the mistake. You will find my note, sir, at Batts's."

Captain Percy bowed—Lord Oldborough bowed—not a word more passed. Lord Oldborough walked on to his carriage, which rolled him away with glorious rapidity, while Godfrey, his face flushed with resentment, looked after him for an instant, then putting on his hat, which the porter held to him, he walked off as fast as possible to Batts's Hotel, impatient to see the note which was to explain the meaning of this extraordinary conduct. The note he found; but it threw little light upon the business. It was written in Secretary Cunningham Falconer's hand, and was as follows·

"Lord Oldborough will inform Captain Percy when any thing shall be decided upon relative to the business on which Captain Percy spoke to Lord Oldborough: and as communication by letter will answer every purpose, his lordship hopes that he shall not be the means of detaining Captain Percy longer from his regiment.

"Tuesday, ——."

A civil dismission!—After three attempts Godfrey obtained a sight of Secretary Cunningham, who, as he

thought, was at the bottom of the affair; but this suspicion was at first dissipated by the unusual openness with which the secretary looked and spoke. Apparently without fear of committing himself, he said at once that it was a very extraordinary proceeding—that he could no way account for it, but by supposing that the lieutenant-colonel in question had, through his relation, Lord Skreene, influenced his grace of Greenwich, and that Lord Oldborough could not, in the present conjuncture, make any movement in direct opposition to the duke.

"In all these things, in all transactions with politicians," said Godfrey, "there are wheels within wheels, which we simple people never suspect; and by awkwardly interfering with them when they are in motion, we are hurt, we know not how or why."

Cunningham smiled significantly, but was silent—his air of frankness vanished, and his solemn reserve returned. "Cunningham will never be hurt in that way," thought Godfrey; "I never saw a fellow so careful of himself. I am convinced he would not hazard his little finger to save the whole British empire, much less to serve a private friend like me, or a poor honest man like Gascoigne."

Godfrey was too proud to make any further attempts to interest his diplomatic cousin in the affair. He arose, and bade the secretary adieu, who, with proper smiles and bows, attended him to the very door.

"Thank heaven!" thought Godfrey, as he left the secretary's office, "I am not forced to dance attendance upon any great man, or any great man's secretary. I am—like my father—independent, and will keep myself so; and if ever I live upon a smile for years, it shall not be upon the smiles of a minister, but on those of a fair lady."

Godfrey left town immediately, and returned to his regiment.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Little versed in the ways of courts or courtiers, Godfrey had been easily deceived by the apparent candour of Cunningham Falconer. The fact was, that Cunningham, not directly from himself, but by means of persons of whom Lord Oldborough could have no suspicion, had insinuated to his lordship that Godfrey Percy was the secret cause of the aversion Miss Hauton showed to the proposed match with the Marquis of Twickenham. This idea, once suggested, was easily confirmed by the account of the young lady's behaviour at the opera, which was reported to Lord Oldborough with proper exaggerations, and with a total misrepresentation of Godfrey's conduct. The fainting at the ball was also recollected, and many other little circumstances combined to bring conviction to Lord Oldborough's mind. He was now persuaded that Major Gascoigne's business was merely a pretence for Godfrey's coming to town: apprehension of being disappointed in completing an alliance essential to his ambitious views, pique at the idea of being deceived, and nearly duped, by a boy and girl, a rooted hatred and utter contempt for love and love affairs, altogether produced that change in Lord Oldborough's manner towards Captain Percy which had appeared so extraordinary. Had Captain Percy delayed to leave town, he would next day have received orders from his commanding officer to join his regiment. As to Major Gascoigne's business, it had made so little impression upon Lord Oldborough, that he had totally forgotten the poor major's name till Godfrey repeated it to him. Indeed, Godfrey himself could scarcely have blamed his lordship for this, had he known how much business, how many cares pressed at this time upon the mind of the unhappy statesman. Besides a load of public business, and all the open and violent attacks of opposition, which he had usually to sustain, he was now under great and increasing anxiety from the discovery of that plot against him, among his immediate associates in office, which the Tourville

papers, deciphered by Commissioner Falconer and Cunningham, had but partially revealed. Lord Oldborough was in the condition of a person apprized that he is standing upon ground that is undermined, but who does not know exactly by what hand or at what moment the train that may destroy him is to be set on fire. One word frequently recurred in the Tourville papers, which puzzled Commissioner Falconer extremely, and of which he was never able to make out the meaning; the word was Gassoc. It was used thus: "We are sorry to find that the Gassoc has not agreed to our proposal."—"No answer has been given to question No. 2 by the Gassoc."—"With regard to the subsidy, of which 35,000*l.* have not been sent or received, the Gassoc has never explained: in consequence, great discontents here."—"If the Gassoc be finally determined against the *Eagle*, means must be taken to accomplish the purposes alluded to in paragraph 4, in green (of the 7th ult.), also those in No. B., in lemon-juice (of September last)."—"The Gassoc will take notes of the mining tools forgotten—also bullets too large, and no flints (as per No. 9, in sympathetic ink)—also the sea-charts, sent instead of maps—consequent delay in march of troops—loss of fortress—to be attributed to *the Eagle*."

The Eagle, which at first had been taken for granted to be the Austrian Eagle, was discovered to be Lord Oldborough. An eagle was his lordship's crest, and the sea-charts, and the mining tools, brought the sense home to him conclusively. It was plain that the Gassoc stood for some person who was inimical to Lord Oldborough, but who it could be was the question. Commissioner Falconer suggested, that for *Gassoc*, you should read *Goshawk*; then, said he, "by finding what nobleman or gentleman has a goshawk in his arms, you have the family name, and the individual is afterward easily ascertained." To the herald's office the commissioner went a goshawking, but after spending a whole day with the assistance of Garter king-at-arms, he could make nothing of his goshawks, and he gave them up.

He next presumed that there might be a mistake of one letter in the foreign spelling of the word, and that *Gassoc* should be *Cassock*, and might then mean a certain bishop, who was known to be a particular enemy of Lord Oldborough. But still there were things as-

cribed to the Gassoc which could not come within the jurisdiction or cognizance of the Cassock—and the commissioner was reluctantly obliged to give up the church. He next suggested, that not only one letter, but every letter in the word might be mistaken in the foreign spelling, and that *Gassoc* might be the French or German written imitation of the oral sound of some English proper name. The commissioner supported this opinion very plausibly by citing many instances of the barbarous spelling of English names by foreigners: Bassompierre writes Jorchaux for York House, Innimthort for Kensington; even in the polite memoirs of Le Comte de Grammont, we have Soutkask for Southesk, and Warméstre for some English name not yet deciphered. Upon this hint the commissioner and Cunningham made anagrams of half the noble names in England, but in vain.

Afterward, recollecting that it was the fashion at one time even to pun in the coats-of-arms of the nobility, and in the choice of their mottoes, he went to work again at the heralds' office, and tried a course of puns, but to no purpose: the commissioner was mortified to find all his ingenuity at fault.

Cunningham took care not to suggest any thing, therefore he could never be convicted of mistake. Nor was he in the least vexed by his father's or his own fruitless labour, because he thought it might tend to his future advancement.

Lord Oldborough had thrown out a hint that it would soon be necessary to recall the present and send a new envoy or resident to the German court in question; Cunningham nourished a hope of being chosen for this purpose, as the Tourville papers were already known to him, and he could, under private instructions, negotiate with M. de Tourville, and draw from him an explanation. He did not, however, trust even his father with the hope he had conceived, but relied on his own address, and continually strove, by oblique hints, to magnify the danger of leaving any part of the plot unravelled.

What effect these suggestions produced, or whether they produced any, Cunningham was unable to judge from the minister's impenetrable countenance. Lord Oldborough lost not a moment in repairing the mistake about sea-charts, and the omission of mining tools

which he had discovered from a paragraph in the Tourville papers; he staid not to inquire whether the error had been wilful or unintentional—*that* he left for future investigation. His next object was the subsidy. This day the Duke of Greenwich gave a cabinet dinner. After dinner, when the servants had retired, and when none of the company were prepared for such a stroke, Lord Oldborough, in his decided but very calm manner, began with, "My lords, I must call your attention to an affair of some importance—the subsidy from the secret service to our German ally."

All who had within them sins unwhipped of justice trembled.

"I have learned, no matter how," continued Lord Oldborough, "that by some strange mistake, 35,000*l*. of that subsidy were not remitted at the time appointed by us, and that discontents, likely to be prejudicial to his majesty's service, have arisen in consequence of this delay."

His lordship paused, and appeared to take no notice of the faces of feigned astonishment and real consciousness by which he was surrounded. Each looked at the other to inquire by what means this secret was divulged, and to discover, if possible, how much more was known. Lord Skreene began at the same moment with the Duke of Greenwich to suggest that some clerk or agent must certainly be much to blame. Lord Oldborough, in his decided tone, replied that it was indifferent to him what clerk, agent, or principal was to blame in the business; but that if the money were not *bonâ fide* remitted, and acknowledged by the court to which it was promised, and before any disagreeable consequences should ensue, he must be under the necessity of stating the affair to his majesty—of resigning his office, and bringing the whole before parliament.

The terror of his voice and lightning of his eye, the dread of his determined spirit, operated powerfully. The subsidy was remitted the next day, though at the expense of a service of plate which Lord Skreene had bespoken for his mistress, and though Secretary Cope was compelled to sell at some disadvantage a few of the very few remaining acres of his paternal estate, to make good what had been borrowed from the secret service money.

At the cabinet dinner, the keen eye of Lord Old-

borough had discerned some displeasure lurking in the mind of the Duke of Greenwich—a man of considerable political consequence from his rank and connexions, and from the number of voices he could command or influence. Lord Oldborough knew that, if he could regain the duke, he could keep in awe his other enemies. His grace was a puzzle-headed, pompous fool, whom Heaven had cursed with the desire to be a statesman. He had not more than four ideas; but to those four, which he conceived to be his own, he was exclusively attached. Yet a person of address and cunning could put things into his head, which after a time he would find there, believe to be his own, and which he would then propose as new with great solemnity, and support with much zeal. Lord Oldborough, however, was neither able nor willing to manage his grace in this manner; he was too imperious; his pride of character was at continual variance with the duke's pride of rank. The duke's was a sort of pride which Lord Oldborough did not always understand, and which, when he did, he despised—it was a species of pride that was perpetually taking offence at trifling failures in etiquette, of which Lord Oldborough, intent upon great objects, was sometimes guilty. There is a class of politicians who err by looking for causes in too high a sphere, and by attributing the changes which perplex states and monarchs to great passions and large motives. Lord Oldborough was one of this class, and with all his talents would have failed in every attempt to comprehend and conciliate the Duke of Greenwich, had he not been assisted by the inferior genius of Commissioner Falconer. While his lordship was thus searching far and wide among the reasonable and probable causes for the duke's coldness, examining and re-examining the bearings of every political measure, as it could affect his grace's interest immediately or remotely, Commissioner Falconer sought for the cause, and found it in the lowest scale of trifles—he made the discovery by means which Lord Oldborough could not have devised, and would not have used. The duke had a favourite under-clerk, who, for a valuable consideration, disclosed the secret to the commissioner. Lord Oldborough had sent his grace a note, written in his own hand, sealed with a wafer. The clerk, who was present when the note was received, said that the duke's face flushed violently, and that he

flung the note immediately to his secretary, exclaiming, "Open that, if you please, sir—*I wonder how any man can have the impertinence to send me his spittle!*"

This nice offence, which bore so coarse a comment, had alienated the mind of the Duke of Greenwich. When Commissioner Falconer had thus sagaciously discovered the cause of the noble duke's displeasure, he with great address applied a remedy. Without ever hinting that he knew of the offensive circumstance, having some business to transact with the duke, he contrived, as if undesignedly, to turn the conversation upon his friend Lord Oldborough's strange and unaccountable negligence of common forms and etiquette; as a proof of which he told the duke in confidence, and in a very low voice, an anecdote, which he heard from his son Cunningham, from Lord Oldborough's own secretary, or the commissioner protested that he would not, he could not have believed it—his lordship had been once actually upon the point of sealing a note with a wafer to one of the royal dukes!—had the wafer absolutely on his lips, when Cunningham felt it his duty to take the liberty of remonstrating. Upon which, Lord Oldborough, as Commissioner Falconer said, looked with the utmost surprise, and replied, "I have sealed with a wafer to the Duke of Greenwich, and *he* was not offended."

This anecdote, the truth of which it fortunately never occurred to the duke to doubt, had an immediate and powerful effect upon his mind, as the commissioner saw by the complacent smile that played on his countenance, and still further by the condescending pity with which his grace observed, that "Great geniuses never understand common things—but do every thing awkwardly, whether they cut a book or seal a note."

Mr. Falconer, having thus brought the duke into fine temper, left him in the best dispositions possible towards Lord Oldborough, went to his lordship to report progress, and to boast of his success; but he told only as much of what had passed as he thought would suit the statesman's character, and ensure his approbation. The Duke of Greenwich was as much pleased by this reconciliation as Lord Oldborough; for, though in a fit of offended pride he had been so rash as to join his lordship's enemies, yet he had always dreaded coming to open war with such an adversary. His grace felt infinitely more

safe and comfortable when he was leaning upon Lord Oldborough than when he stood opposed to him, even in secret. There were points in politics in which he and Lord Oldborough coincided, though they had arrived at these by far different roads. They agreed in an overweening love of aristocracy, and in an inclination towards arbitrary power; they agreed in a hatred of innovation; they agreed in the principle that free discussion should be discouraged, and that the country should be governed with a high and strong hand. On these principles Lord Oldborough always acted, but seldom spoke, and the Duke of Greenwich continually talked, but seldom acted: in fact, his grace, "though he roared so loud, and looked so wondrous grim," was, in action, afraid of every shadow. Right glad was he to have his political vaunts made good by a coadjutor of commanding talents, resource, and civil courage. Yet, as Lord Oldborough observed, with a man of such wayward pride and weak understanding, there was no security from day to day for the permanence of his attachment. It was then that Commissioner Falconer, ever ready at expedients, suggested that an alliance between his grace's family and his lordship's would be the best possible security; and that the alliance might be easily effected, since it was evident of late that the Marquis of Twickenham was much disposed to admire the charms of his lordship's niece, Miss Hauton. Lord Oldborough had not remarked that the marquis admired any thing but good wine; his lordship's attention was not turned to these things, nor had he in general much faith in friendships founded on family alliances; but he observed that the duke was peculiarly tenacious of connexions and relationships, and therefore this might be the best method of holding him.

From the moment Lord Oldborough decided in favour of this scheme, Mr. and Mrs. Falconer had done all in their power, with the utmost zeal and address, to forward it, by contriving continual dancing parties and musical meetings, at their house, for the young people. Lady Oldborough, who was sickly, whose manners were not popular, and who could not bear *to be put out of her way*, was quite unsuited to this sort of business, and rejoiced that the Falconers took it off her hands. Things were just in this state, and Lord Oldborough had fixed his mind upon the match, when Godfrey Percy's arrival

in town had threatened disappointment. In consequence of this fear, Lord Oldborough not only despatched Godfrey directly to his regiment, but, to put an end to the danger at once, to banish the idea of seeing him again completely out of the young lady's head, the cruel uncle and decided politician had Godfrey's regiment ordered immediately to the West Indies.

LETTER FROM GODFREY PERCY TO HIS FATHER.

"My dear Father,

"We have a new lieutenant-colonel. Lord Skreene has removed his precious nephew to another regiment, and to punish us for not liking the pretty boy, has ordered us all off to the West Indies: so ends our croaking. Our new king Log we cannot complain of as too young, or too much on the *qui-vive:* he looks as if he was far gone in a lethargy, can hardly keep himself awake while he is giving the word of command, and, instead of being a martinet, I am sure he would not care if the whole corps wore their regimentals the wrong side outwards. Gascoigne will have all the regimental business on his shoulders, and no man can do it better. He is now at my elbow, supplying four hundred men and forty officers with heads. The noise of questions and commands, and the notes of preparation, are so loud and dissonant, that I hardly know what I write. Gascoigne, though not benefited, was obliged to me for my wronghead-journey to London. Henry was very angry with Lord Oldborough for jilting me—Gascoigne with much ado kept him in proper manners towards the lieutenant-colonel, and I, in admiration of Gascoigne, kept my temper miraculously. But there was an impertinent puppy of an ensign, a partisan of the lieutenant-colonel, who wanted, I'm convinced, to have the credit of fighting a duel for the colonel; and he one day said, in Captain Henry's hearing, that 'it was no wonder some men should rail against ministerial *influence*, who had no friends to look to, and were men of no family.'—'Do you mean that for me, sir?' said Henry. 'Judge for yourself, sir.' Poor Henry judged ill, and challenged the ensign. They fought, and the ensign was slightly wounded. This duel has wakened curiosity again about Captain Henry's birth, and he is in danger of being ex-

posed continually to things he could not like, and could not well resent. He consulted Gascoigne and me, and has told us all he knows of his history. Read what follows to yourself, for I have permission to speak of his affairs only to you. Captain Henry assured us that he really does not know to what family he belongs, nor who his father and mother were; but he has reason to believe that they were Irish. He was bred up in a merchant's house in Dublin. The merchant broke, and went off with his family to America. Henry was at that time fifteen or sixteen. The merchant then said, that Henry was not his nephew, nor any relation to him, but hinted that he was the son of a Mr. Henry, who had taken an unfortunate part in *the troubles* of Ireland, and who had *suffered*—that his mother had been a servant-maid, and that she was dead. The merchant added, that he had taken care of Henry from regard to his father; but that, obliged by his own failure in business to quit the country, he must thenceforward resign the charge. He further observed, that the army was now the young man's only resource, and, on taking leave, he put into Henry's hands a 50*l.* note, and an ensign's commission. With his commission he joined his regiment, which was at Cork. A few days after his arrival, a Cork banker called upon him, and inquired whether he was Ensign Charles Henry; and upon his answering in the affirmative, informed him that he had orders to pay him 400*l.* a year in quarterly payments. The order came from a house in Dublin, and this was all the banker knew. On Henry's application in Dublin, he was told that they had direction to stop payment of the annuity if any questions were asked. Of course, Henry asked no more. The annuity has been regularly paid to him ever since. When he was scarcely seventeen, he was pillaged of a couple of hundred pounds one night by a set of sharpers at the gaming-table: this loss roused his prudence, and he has never played since. He has for many years lived within his pay; for he prudently considered, that the extraordinary supply might suddenly fail, and then he might be left in debt and distress, and at the same time with habits of extravagance. Instead of which, he has laid up money every year, and has a considerable sum. He wishes to quit the army, and to go into a mercantile house, for which his early education has fitted him. He has a particular talent for lan-

guages: speaks French and Italian accurately—Spanish and Dutch well enough for all the purposes of commerce. So any mercantile house who wants a partner, agent, or *clerk for foreign affairs* (perhaps I am not correct in the technical terms), could not do better than to take Charles Henry. For his integrity and honour I would answer with my life. Now, my dear father, could you have the goodness to assist us so far as to write and inquire about the partner in London of those Dutch merchants, whom you had an opportunity of obliging at the time of the shipwreck? I cannot recollect their strange names, but if I am not mistaken, they left you their address, and that of their London correspondent. If this partner should be a substantial man, perhaps our best plan would be to try to get Henry into his house. You have certainly some claim there, and the Dutchmen desired we would apply to them if ever they could do any thing to serve us—we can but try. 'I am afraid you will say, '*This is like one of Godfrey's wild schemes.*' I am still more afraid that you should think Henry's romantic story is *against him*—but such things are—that is all I can say. Here is no motive for deception; and if you were to see the young man, his countenance and manner would immediately persuade you of his perfect truth and ingenuousness I am aware that his romantic history would not do for the Dutch merchants, or the London partner; they would probably set him down directly for an adventurer, and refuse to have any thing to do with him: so I see no necessity for beginning by stating it. I know you hate, and I am sure so do I, all novel-like concealments and mysteries; but because a man makes a bargain with another, he is not obliged to tell him his whole history—because he takes him for his partner or his master, he is not called upon to make him his confidant. All that the merchants can want or have a right to know is forthcoming and clear—character and money.

"My affectionate love and old-fashioned duty to my dear mother—pray assure her and my sisters that they shall hear from me, though I am going to have 'one foot on sea and one on land.'

"Tell dear Caroline the portfolio she made for me shall go with me to the world's end; and Rosamond's *Tippo Saib* shall see the *West* Indies—Gascoigne has been in the West Indies before now, and he says and

proves, that temperance and spice are the best preservatives in that climate; so you need not fear for me, for you know I love pepper better than port. I am called away, and can only add that the yellow fever there has subsided, as an officer who arrived last week tells me. Our regiment is just going to embark, in high spirits. God bless you all.

"Your affectionate son,

"G. Percy.

"P.S.—Don't let my mother or Rosamond trust to newspaper reports—trust to nothing but my letters; Caroline, I know, is fit to be the sister, and I hope will some time be the mother, of heroes."

CHAPTER IX.

Lord Oldborough expected that the prompt measure of despatching the dangerous Godfrey to the West Indies would restore things to their former train. For a week after Godfrey Percy's departure, Miss Hauton seemed much affected by it, and was from morning till night languid or in the sullens: of all which Lord Oldborough took not the slightest notice. In the course of a fortnight Miss Falconer, who became inseparable from Miss Hauton, flattering, pitying, and humouring her, contrived to recover the young lady from this fit of despondency, and produced her again at musical parties. She was passionately fond of music; the Miss Falconers played on the piano-forte and sang, their brother John accompanied exquisitely on the flute, and the Marquis of Twickenham, who was dull as "the fat weed that grows on Lethe's brink," stood by—admiring. His proposal was made in form—and in form the young lady evaded it—in form her uncle, Lord Oldborough, told her that the thing must be, and proceeded directly to decide upon the settlements with the Duke of Greenwich, and set the lawyers to work. In the mean time, the bride elect wept, and deplored, and refused to eat, drink, or speak, except to the Miss Falconers, with whom she was closeted for hours, and to whom the task of man-

aging her was consigned by common consent. The marquis, who, though he was, as he said, much in love, was not very delicate as to the possession of the lady's affections, wondered that any one going to be married to the Marquis of Twickenham could be so shy and so melancholy; but her confidantes assured him that it was all uncommon refinement and sensibility, which was their sweetest Maria's only fault. Excellent claret, and a moderately good opinion of himself, persuaded the marquis of the truth of all the Miss Falconers pleased to say, and her uncle graciously granted the delays which the young lady prayed for week after week—till, at last, striking his hand upon the table, Lord Oldborough said, "There must be an end of this—the papers must be signed this day se'nnight—Maria Hauton shall be married this day fortnight." Maria Hauton was sent for to her uncle's study; heard her doom in sullen silence; but she made no show of resistance, and Lord Oldborough was satisfied. An hour afterward Commissioner Falconer begged admission, and presented himself with a face of consternation—Lord Oldborough, not easily surprised or alarmed, waited, however, with some anxiety, till he should speak.

"My lord, I beg pardon for this intrusion: I know, at this time, you are much occupied; but it is absolutely necessary I should communicate—I feel it to be my duty immediately—and I cannot hesitate—though I really do not know how to bring myself—"

There was something in the apparent embarrassment and distress of Mr. Falconer which Lord Oldborough's penetrating eye instantly discerned to be affected. His lordship turned a chair towards him, but said not a word. The commissioner sat down like a man acting despair; but looking for a moment in Lord Oldborough's face, he saw what his lordship was thinking of, and immediately his affected embarrassment became real and great.

"Well, commissioner, what is the difficulty?"

"My lord, I have within this quarter of an hour heard what will ruin me for ever in your lordship's opinion, unless your lordship does me the justice to believe that I never heard or suspected it before: I have only to trust to your magnanimity—and I do."

Lord Oldborough bowed slightly—"The fact, if you please, my dear sir."

"The fact, my lord, is, that Captain Bellamy, whose eyes, I suppose, have been quickened by jealousy, has discovered what has escaped us all—what never would have occurred to me—what never could have entered into my mind to suspect—what I still hope—"

"The fact, sir, let me beg."

The urgency of Lord Oldborough's look and voice admitted of no delay.

"Miss Hauton is in love with my son John."

"Indeed!"

This "Indeed!" was pronounced in a tone which left the commissioner in doubt what it expressed, whether pure surprise, indignation, or contempt—most of the last, perhaps: he longed to hear it repeated, but he had not that satisfaction. Lord Oldborough turned abruptly,—walked up and down the room with such a firm tread as sounded ominously to the commissioner's ear.

"So then, sir, Miss Hauton, I think you tell me, is in love with Cornet Falconer?"

"Captain Bellamy says so, my lord."

"Sir, I care not what Captain Bellamy says, nor do I well know who or what he is; much less what he can have to do with my family affairs: I ask, sir, what reason you have to believe that my niece is in love, as it is called, with your son? You certainly would not make such a report to me without good reason for believing it: what are your reasons?"

"Excuse me, my lord, my reasons are founded on information which I do not think myself at liberty to repeat: but upon hearing the report from—" The commissioner, in the hurry and confusion of his mind, and in his new situation, totally lost his *tact*, and at this moment was upon the point of again saying *from Captain Bellamy*; but the flash of Lord Oldborough's eye warned him of his danger—he dropped the name.

"I immediately went to sound my son John, and, as far as I can judge, he has not yet any suspicion of the truth."

Lord Oldborough's countenance cleared. The commissioner recovered his presence of mind, for he thought he saw his way before him. "I thought it my duty to let your lordship know the first hint I had of such a nature; for how soon it might be surmised, or what steps might be taken, I must leave it to your lordship

to judge: I can only assure you, that as yet, to the best of my belief, John has not any suspicion: fortunately, he is very slow, and not very bright."

Lord Oldborough stood with compressed lips, seeming to listen, but deep in thought.

"Mr. Commissioner Falconer, let us understand one another well now, as we have done hitherto. If your son, Cornet Falconer, were to marry Maria Hauton, she would no longer be my niece, he would have a portionless, friendless, and, in my opinion, a very silly wife. He is, I think you say, not very bright himself; he would probably remain a cornet the rest of his days—all idea of assistance being of course out of the question in that case, from me or mine, to him or his."

The awful pause which Lord Oldborough made, and his determined look, gave the commissioner opportunity to reflect much in a few seconds.

"On the contrary," resumed his lordship, "if your son John, my dear sir, show the same desire to comply with my wishes, and to serve my interests, which I have found in the rest of his family, he shall find me willing and able to advance him as well as his brother Cunningham."

"Your lordship's wishes will, I can answer for it, be laws to him, as well as to the rest of his family."

"In one word then—let Cornet Falconer be married elsewhere, within a fortnight, and I prophesy that within a year he shall be a field-officer—within two years, a lieutenant-colonel."

Commissioner Falconer bowed twice—low to the field-officer, lower to the lieutenant-colonel.

"I have long had a match in my eye for John," said the father; "but a fortnight, my gracious lord—that is so very short a time! Your lordship will consider there are delicacies in these cases: no young lady—it is impossible—your lordship must be sensible that it is really impossible, with a young lady of any family."

"I am aware that it is difficult, but not impossible," replied Lord Oldborough, rising deliberately.

The commissioner took his leave, stammering somewhat of "nothing being impossible for a friend,"—courtier he should have said.

The commissioner set to work in earnest about the match he had in view for John. Not one, but several

fair visions flitted before the eye of his politic mind. The Miss Chattertons—any one of whom would, he knew, come readily within the terms prescribed, but then they had neither fortune nor connexions. A relation of Lady Jane Granville's—excellent connexion, and reasonable fortune; but there all the decorum of regular approaches and time would be necessary: luckily, a certain Miss Petcalf was just arrived from India with a large fortune. The general, her father, was anxious to introduce his daughter to the fashionable world, and to marry her for connexion—fortune no object to him—delicacies he would waive. The commissioner saw—counted—and decided—(there was a brother Petcalf, too, who might do for Georgiana—but for that no hurry)—John was asked by his father if he would like to be a major in a year, and a lieutenant-colonel in two years?

To be sure he would—was he a fool?

Then he must be married in a fortnight.

John did not see how this conclusion followed immediately from the premises, for John was not *quite* a fool; so he answered "Indeed!" An *indeed* so unlike Lord Oldborough's, that the commissioner, struck with the contrast, could scarcely maintain the gravity the occasion required, and he could only pronounce the words, "General Petcalf has a daughter."

"Ay, Miss Petcalf—ay, he is a general; true—now I see it all: well, I'm their man—I have no objection. —But Miss Petcalf!—is not that the Indian girl? Is not there a drop of black blood?—No, no, father," cried John, drawing himself up, "I'll be d—d . . . ."

"Hear me first, my own John," cried his father, much and justly alarmed, for this motion was the precursor of an obstinate fit, which, if John took, perish father, mother, the whole human race, he could not be moved from the settled purpose of his soul. "Hear me, my beloved John, for you are a man of sense," said his unblushing father; "do you think I'd have a drop of black blood for my daughter-in-law, much less let my favourite son—But there's none—it is climate —all climate, as you may see by only looking at Mrs. Governor Carneguy, how she figures everywhere; and Miss Petcalf is nothing near so dark as Mrs. Carneguy, surely.'

"Surely," said John.

"And her father, the general, gives her an Indian fortune to suit an Indian complexion."

"That's good, at any rate," quoth John.

"Yes, my dear major—yes, my lieutenant-colonel—to be sure that's good. So to secure the good the gods provide us, go you this minute, dress, and away to your fair Indian! I'll undertake the business with the general."

"But a fortnight, my dear father," said John, looking into the glass: "how can that be?"

"Look again, and tell me how it can *not* be? Pray don't put that difficulty into Miss Petcalf's head—into her heart I am sure it would never come."

John yielded his shoulder to the push his father gave him towards the door, but suddenly turning back—"Zounds! father, a fortnight!" he exclaimed, "why there won't be time to buy even boots!"

"And what are even boots," replied his father, "to such a man as you? Go, go, man; your legs are better than all the boots in the world."

Flattery can find her way to sooth the dullest, coldest ear *alive*. John looked in the glass again—dressed, and went to flatter Miss Petcalf. The proposal was graciously accepted, for the commissioner stated, as he was permitted in confidence, to the general, that his son was under the special patronage of Lord Oldborough, who would make him a lieutenant-colonel in two years. The general, who looked only for connexion and genteel family, was satisfied. The young lady started at the first mention of an *early day*; but there was an absolute necessity for pressing that point, since the young officer was ordered to go abroad in a fortnight, and could not bear to leave England without completing his union with Miss Petcalf. These reasons, as no other were to be had, proved sufficient with father and daughter.

John was presented with a captain's commission. He, before the end of the fortnight, looked again and again in the glass to take leave of himself, hung up his flute, and—was married. The bride and bridegroom were presented to Lord and Lady Oldborough, and went immediately abroad.

Thus the forms of homage and the rights of vassalage are altered; the competition for favour having suc-

ceeded to the dependence for protection, the feudal lord of ancient times could ill compete in power with the influence of the modern political patron.

Pending the negotiation of this marriage, and during the whole of this eventful fortnight, Cunningham Falconer had been in the utmost anxiety that can be conceived—not for a brother's interests, but for his own: his own advancement, he judged, would depend upon the result, and he could not rest day or night till the marriage was happily completed; though, at the same time, he secretly cursed all the loves and marriages, which had drawn Lord Oldborough's attention away from that embassy on which his own heart was fixed.

Buckhurst, the while, though not admitted behind the scenes, said he was sufficiently amused by what he saw on the stage, enjoyed the comedy of the whole, and pretty well made out for himself the double plot. The confidante, Miss Falconer, played her part to admiration, and prevailed on Miss Hauton to appear on the appointed day in the character of a *reasonable woman*; and accordingly she suffered herself to be led, in fashionable style, to the hymeneal altar by the Marquis of Twickenham. This dénouement satisfied Lord Oldborough.

CHAPTER X.

The day after his niece's marriage was happily effected, Lord Oldborough said to his secretary, "Now, Mr. Cunningham Falconer, I have leisure to turn my mind again to the Tourville papers."

"I was in hopes, my lord," said the secretary (*se composant le visage*), "I was in hopes that this happy alliance, which secures the Duke of Greenwich, would have put your lordship's mind completely at ease, and that you would not have felt it necessary to examine farther into that mystery."

"Weak men never foresee adversity during prosperity, nor prosperity during adversity," replied Lord Oldborough. "His majesty has decided immediately to recall his present envoy at that German court; a new one will

be sent, and the choice of that envoy his majesty is graciously pleased to leave to me. You are a very young man, Mr. Cunningham Falconer; but you have given me such *written* irrefragable proofs of your ability and information, that I have no scruple in recommending you to his majesty as a person to whom his interests may be intrusted; and the zeal and attachment your family have shown me, in actions, not in words only, have convinced me that I cannot choose better for my private affairs. Therefore, if the appointment be agreeable to you, you cannot too soon make what preparations may be necessary."

Cunningham, delighted, made his acknowledgments and thanks for the honour and the favour conferred upon him with all the eloquence in his power.

"I endeavour not to do any thing hastily, Mr. Cunningham Falconer," said his lordship. "I frankly tell you that I was not at first prepossessed in your favour, nor did I feel inclined to do more for you than that to which I had been induced by peculiar circumstances. Under this prepossession, I perhaps did not for some time do justice to your talents; but I should be without judgment, or without candour, if I did not feel and acknowledge the merit of the performance which I hold in my hand."

The performance was a pamphlet in support of Lord Oldborough's administration, published in Cunningham's name, but the greater part of it was written by his good genius in the garret.

"On *this*," said Lord Oldborough, putting his hand upon it as it lay on the table, "on *this* found your just title, sir, to my esteem and confidence."

Would not the truth have burst from any man of common generosity, honour, or honesty? Would not a man who had any feeling, conscience, or shame, supposing he could have resolved to keep his secret, at this instant have been ready to sink into the earth with confusion under this unmerited praise? In availing himself falsely of a title to esteem and confidence, then fraudulently of another's talents to obtain favour, honour, and emolument, would not a blush, or silence, some awkwardness, or some hesitation have betrayed him to eyes far less penetrating than those of Lord Oldborough? Yet nothing of this was felt by Cunningham. He made, with a good grace, all the disqualifying speeches of a modest

author, repeated his thanks and assurances of grateful attachment, and retired triumphant. It must be acknowledged that he was fit for a diplomatist. His credentials were forthwith made out in form, and his instructions, public and private, furnished. No expense was spared in fitting him out for his embassy. His preparations made, his suite appointed, his liveries finished, his carriage at the door, he departed in grand style; and all Commissioner Falconer's friends, of which, at this time, he could not fail to have many, poured in with congratulations on the rapid advancement of his sons, and on all sides exclamations were heard in favour of *friends in power*.

"True—very true, indeed. And see what it is," said Commissioner Falconer, turning to Buckhurst, "see what it is to have a son so perverse that he will not make use of a good friend when he has one, and who will not accept the promise of an excellent living when he can get it!"

All his friends and acquaintance, now joining in one chorus, told Buckhurst, in courtly terms, that he was a fool, and Buckhurst began to think they must be right. "For here," said he to himself, "are my two precious brothers finely provided for—one an envoy, the other a major *in esse*, and a lieutenant-colonel *in posse*—and I, *in esse* and *in posse*, what?—Nothing but a good-fellow—one day with the Four-in-hand Club, the next in my chambers, studying the law, by which I shall never make a penny. And there's Miss Caroline Percy, who has declined the honour of my hand, no doubt merely because I have indulged a little in good company, instead of immuring myself with Coke and Blackstone, Viners and Saunders, Bosanquet and Schoales, or chaining myself to a special pleader's desk, like cousin Alfred, that galley-slave of the law!—No, no; I'll not make a galley-slave of myself. Besides, at my mother's, in all that set, and in the higher circles with Hauton and the Clays, and those people, whenever I appear in the character of a poor barrister, I am scouted—should never have *got on* at all, but for my being a wit—a wit! and have not I wit enough to make my fortune? As my father says, What hinders me?—My conscience only. And why should my conscience be so cursedly delicate, so unlike other men's consciences?"

In this humour Buckhurst was easily persuaded by his

father to take orders. The paralytic incumbent of Chipping-Friars had just at this time another stroke of the palsy, on which Colonel Hauton congratulated the young deacon; and, to keep him in patience while waiting for the third stroke, made him chaplain to his regiment. The Clays also introduced him to their uncle, Bishop Clay, who had, as they told him, taken a prodigious fancy to him; for he observed that in carving a partridge Buckhurst never touched the wing with a knife, but, after nicking the joint tore it off, so as to leave adhering to the bone that muscle obnoxious to all good eaters. The bishop pronounced him to be "a capital carver."

Fortune at this time threw into Buckhurst's hands, unasked, unlooked-for, and in the oddest way imaginable, a gift of no small value in itself, and an earnest of her future favours.

At some high festival, Buckhurst was invited to dine with the bishop. Now Bishop Clay was a rubicund, full-blown, short-necked prelate, with the fear of apoplexy continually before him, except when dinner was on the table; and at this time a dinner was on the table, rich with every dainty of the season that earth, air, and sea could provide. Grace being first said by the chaplain, the bishop sat down "*richly to enjoy;*" but it happened, in the first onset, that a morsel too large for his lordship's swallow stuck in his throat. The bishop grew crimson—purple—black in the face; the chaplain started up and untied his neckcloth. The guests crowded round, one offering water, another advising bread, another calling for a raw egg, another thumping his lordship on the back. Buckhurst Falconer, with more presence of mind than was shewn by any other person, saved his patron's life. He blew with force in the bishop's ear, and thus produced such a salutary convulsion in the throat as relieved his lordship from the danger of suffocation.* The bishop, recovering his breath and vital functions, sat up restored to life and dinner; he ate again, and drank to Mr. Buckhurst Falconer's health, with thanks for this good service to the church, to which he prophe-

* Some learned persons assert that this could not have happened. We can only aver that it did happen. The assertions against the possibility of the fact remind us of the physician in Zadig, who, as the fable tells us, wrote a book to prove that Zadig should have gone blind, though he had actually recovered the use of his eye. Zadig never read the book.

sied the reverend young gentleman would, in good time, prove an honour. And that he might be, in some measure, the means of accomplishing his own prophecy, Bishop Clay did, before he slept, which was immediately after dinner, present Mr. Buckhurst Falconer with a living worth 400*l.* a year; a living which had not fallen into the bishop's gift above half a day, and which, as there were six worthy clergymen in waiting for it, would necessarily have been disposed of the next morning.

"Oh, star of patronage! shine ever thus upon the Falconers!" cried Buckhurst, when, elevated with wine in honour of the church, he gave an account to his father at night of the success of the day. "Oh! thou whose influence has, for us, arrested Fortune at the top of her wheel, be ever thus propitious!—Only make me a dean. Have you not made my brother, the dunce, a colonel? and my brother, the knave, an envoy?—I only pray to be a dean; I ask not yet to be a bishop; you see I have some conscience left."

"True," said his father, laughing. "Now go to bed, Buckhurst; you may, for your fortune is up."

"Ha! my good cousin Percys, where are you now?—Education, merit, male and female, where are you now? Planting cabbages, and presiding at a day-school: one son plodding in a pleader's office—another cast in an election for an hospital physician—a third encountering a plague in the West Indies. I give you joy!"

No wonder the commissioner exulted; for he had not only provided thus rapidly for his sons, but he had besides happy expectations for himself. With Lord Oldborough he was now in higher favour and confidence than he had ever hoped to be. Lord Oldborough, who was a man little prone to promise, and who always did more than he said, had, since the marriage of his niece, thrown out a hint that he was aware of the expense it must have been to Commissioner and Mrs. Falconer to give entertainments continually, and to keep open house, as they had done this winter, for his political friends—no instance of zeal in his majesty's service, his lordship said, he hoped was ever lost upon him; and, if he continued in power, he trusted he should find occasion to show his gratitude. This from another minister might mean nothing but to pay with words; from Lord Oldborough the commissioner justly deemed it as good as a

promissory note for a lucrative place. Accordingly he put it in circulation directly among his creditors, and he no longer trembled at the expense at which he had lived and was living. Both Mrs. Falconer and he had ever considered a good cook and an agreeable house as indispensably necessary to those who would rise in the world; and they laid it down as a maxim, that, if people wished to grow rich, they must begin by appearing so. Upon this plan every thing in their establishment, table, servants, equipage, dress, were far more splendid than their fortune could afford. The immediate gratification which resulted from this display, combining with their maxims of policy, encouraged the whole family to continue this desperate game. Whenever the timidity of the commissioner had started; when, pressed by creditors, he had backed, and had wished to stop in this course of extravagance; his lady, of a more intrepid character, urged him forward, pleading that he had gone too far to recede—that the poorer they were, the more necessary to keep up the brilliant appearance of affluence. How else could her daughters, after all the sums that had been risked upon them, hope to be advantageously established? How otherwise could they preserve what her friend Lady Jane Granville so justly styled the patronage of fashion?

When success proved Mrs. Falconer to be right, "Now, Commissioner Falconer! now!" How she triumphed, and how she talked! Her sons all in such favour—her daughters in such fashion! No party without the Miss Falconers! Miss Falconers must sing—Miss Falconers must play—Miss Falconers must dance, or no lady of a house could feel herself happy, or could think she had done her duty; no piano, no harp could draw such crowds as the Miss Falconers'. It was the ambition among the fashionable men to dance with the Miss Falconers, to flirt with the Miss Falconers. "Not merely flirting, ma'am," as Mrs. Falconer said, and took proper pains should be heard, "but several serious proposals from very respectable quarters;" however, none *yet* exactly what she could resolve to accept for her girls—she looked high for them, she owned—she thought she had a right to look high. Girls in fashion should not take the first offers—they should hold up their heads: why should they not aspire to rank, why not to title, as well as to fortune?

Poor Petcalf! General Petcalf's son had been for some time, as it was well known, desperately in love with Miss Georgiana Falconer; but what chance had he now? However, he was to be *managed:* he was useful sometimes as a partner, "to whom one may say one is engaged when a person one does not choose to dance with asks for the honour of one's hand—useful sometimes to turn over the leaves of the music-book—useful always as an attendant in public places—useful, in short, to be exhibited as a captive; for one captive leads to another conquest." And Miss Arabella Falconer, too, could boast her conquests, though nobody, merely by looking at her would have guessed it: but she was a striking exemplification of the truth of Lady Jane Granville's maxim, that fashion, like Venus's girdle, can beautify any girl, let her be ever so ugly.

And now the Falconer family having risen and succeeded beyond their most sanguine hopes by a combination of lucky circumstances, and by adherence to their favourite system, we leave them fortified in their principles, and at the height of prosperity

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CHAPTER XI.

Fortune, as if she had been piqued by Mr. Percy's disdain, and jealous of his professed reliance upon the superior power of her rival, Prudence, seemed now determined to humble him and all his family, to try if she could not force him to make some of the customary sacrifices of principle to propitiate her favour.

Unsuspicious of the designs that were carrying forward against him in secret, Mr. Percy had quite forgotten his fears that his wicked relation Sir Robert Percy, and Solicitor Sharpe, might take advantage of the loss of that deed which had never been found since the night of the fire at Percy-hall. It was nearly two years afterward that Mr. Percy received a letter from his cousin, Sir Robert, informing him that he had been advised to dispute the title to the Percy estate, that he had the opinion of the first lawyers in England in his favour, and that he had given directions to his solicitor, Mr.

Sharpe, to commence a suit to reinstate the lawful heir in the property of his ancestors. Sir Robert Percy added something about his reluctance to go to law, and a vast deal about candour, justice, and family friendship, which it would be needless and unreasonable to repeat.

Fresh search was now made for the lost deed, but in vain; and in vain Rosamond reproached herself with having betrayed the secret of that loss to the revengeful attorney. The ensuing post brought notice from Mr. Sharpe that proceedings were commenced. In Sir Robert's letter, though not in the attorney's, there was obviously left an opening for an offer to compromise; this was done either with intent to lure Mr. Percy on to make an offer, which might afterward appear against him, or it was done in the hope, that intimidated by the fear of an expensive and hazardous suit, Mr. Percy might give up half his estate, to secure the quiet possession of the remainder. But they knew little of Mr. Percy who argued in this manner: he was neither to be lured nor intimidated from his right—all compromise, "all terms of commerce he disdained." He sent no answer, but prepared to make a vigorous defence. For this purpose he wrote to his son Alfred, desiring him to spare no pains or expense to engage the best counsel, and to put them in full possession of the cause. Alfred regretted that he was not of sufficient standing at the bar to take the lead in conducting his father's cause: he, however, prepared all the documents with great care and ability. From time to time, as the business went on, he wrote to his father in good spirits, saying that he had excellent hopes they should succeed, notwithstanding the unfortunate loss of the deed; that the more he considered the case, the more clearly the justice of their cause and the solidity of their right appeared. Alas! Alfred showed himself to be but a young lawyer, in depending so much upon right and justice, while a point of law was against him. It is unnecessary, and would be equally tedious and unintelligible to most readers, to dwell upon the details of this suit. Contrary to the usual complaints of the law's delay, this cause went through the courts in a short time, because Mr. Percy did not make use of any subterfuge to protract the business. A decree was given in favour of Sir Robert Percy, and he became the legal possessor of

the great Percy estate in Hampshire, which had been so long the object of his machinations.

Thus, at one stroke, the Percy family fell from the station and affluence which they had so long, and, in the opinion of all who knew them, so well enjoyed. Great was the regret among the higher classes, and great, indeed, the lamentations of the poor in the neighbourhood, when the decree was made known. It seemed as if the change in their situation was deplored as a general misfortune, and as if it were felt by all more than by the sufferers themselves, who were never seen to give way to weak complaints, or heard to utter an invective against their adversary. This magnanimity increased the public sympathy, and pity for them was soon converted into indignation against Sir Robert Percy. Naturally insolent, and now elated with success, he wrote post after post to express his impatience to come and take possession of his estate, and to hasten the departure of his relations from the family seat. This was as cruel as it was unnecessary, for from the moment when they learned the event of the trial, they had been occupied with the preparations for their departure; for the resignation of all the conveniences and luxuries they possessed, all the pleasures associated with the idea of home; for parting with all the animate and inanimate objects to which they had long and early habits of affection and attachment. This family had never been proud in prosperity, nor were they abject in adversity; they submitted with fortitude to their fate; yet they could not, without regret, leave the place where they had spent so many happy years.

It had been settled that the improvements which Mr. Percy had made on the estate, the expense of the buildings and furniture at Percy-hall, of which a valuation had been made, should be taken in lieu of all arrears of rent to which Sir Robert might lay claim. In consequence of this award, Mr. Percy and his family were anxious to leave every thing about the house and place in perfect order, that they might fulfil punctually their part of the agreement. The evening before they were to quit Percy-hall, they went into every room, to take a review of the whole. The house was peculiarly convenient and well arranged. Mr. Percy had spared nothing to render it in every respect agreeable, not only to his guests, but to his family, to make his children

happy in their home. His daughters' apartments he had fitted up for them in the neatest manner, and they had taken pleasure in ornamenting them with their own work and drawings. They felt very melancholy the evening they were to take leave of these for ever. They took down some of their drawings, and all the little trophies preserved from childhood, memorials of early ingenuity or taste, which could be of no use or value to any one except to themselves; every thing else they agreed to leave as usual, to show how kind their father had been to them—a sentiment well suited to their good and innocent minds. They opened their writing-tables and their drawing-boxes for the last time, for the last time they put fresh flowers into their flower-pots, and, with a sigh, left their little apartments.

All the family then went out to walk in the park and through the shrubberies. It was a delightful summer's evening; the birds were singing—"Caring little," as Rosamond said, "for our going away." The sun was just setting, and they thought they had never seen the place look so beautiful. Indeed Mr. and Mrs. Percy had, for many years, delighted in cultivating the natural beauties of this picturesque situation, and their improvements were now beginning to appear to advantage. But they were never to enjoy the success of their labours! The old steward followed the family in this walk. He stopped every now and then to deplore over each fine tree or shrub as they passed, and could scarcely refrain from bursting into invectives against *him* that was coming after them into possession.

"The whole country cries shame upon the villain," John began; but Mr. Percy, with a smile, stopped him.

"Let us bear our misfortunes, John, with a good grace—let us be thankful for the happiness which we have enjoyed, and submit ourselves to the will of Providence. Without any hypocrisy or affected resignation, I say, at this instant, what, with my whole heart, I feel, that I submit, without repining, to the will of God, and firmly believe that all is for the best."

"And so I strive to do," said John. "But only, I say, if it had pleased God to order it otherwise, it's a pity the wicked should come *just* after us to enjoy themselves, when they have robbed us of all."

"Not of all," said Mr. Percy.

"What is it they have not robbed us of?" cried John: "not a thing but they must have from us."

"No; the best of all things we keep for ourselves—it cannot be taken from us—a good conscience."

"Worth all the rest—that's true," said John; "and that is what he will never have who is coming here to-morrow—never—never! They say he don't sleep at nights. But I'll say no more about him, only—he's not a good man."

"I am sure, John, you are not a good courtier," said Mrs. Percy, smiling: "you ought to prepare to pay your court to your new master."

"*My* new master!" cried John, growing red: "the longest day ever I live, I'll never have a new master! All that I have in the world came from you, and I'll never have another master. Sure you will let me follow you? I will be no trouble: though but little, maybe I can do something, still. Surely, madam—surely, sir—young ladies, you'll speak for me—I shall be let to follow the fortunes of the family, and go along with you into *banishment*."

"My good John," said Mr. Percy, "since you desire to follow us into *banishment*, as you call it, you shall; and as long as we have any thing upon earth, you shall never want. You must stay here to-morrow, after we are gone, to give up possession." (John could not stand this, but turned away to hide his face.) "When your business is done," continued Mr. Percy, "you may set out and follow us as soon as you please."

"I thank you, sir, kindly," said John, with a most grateful bow, that took in all the family, "that's new life to me."

He said not a word more during the rest of the walk, except just as he passed near the beach where the ship was wrecked, he exclaimed, "There was the first beginning of all our misfortunes: who would have thought that when we gave them shelter we should be turned out so soon ourselves? 'twas that drunken rascal of a Dutch carpenter was the cause of all!"

The next morning the whole family set out in an open carriage, which had been made for the purpose of carrying as many of the young people as possible upon excursions of pleasure. It was a large sociable, which they used to call their *caravan*.

At the great gate of the park old John stopped the

carriage, and leaning over to his master, whispered, "I beg your pardon, sir, but God bless you, and don't drive through the village: if you please, take the back road; for I've just learned that *he* is on the great road, and as near hand as the turn at the school-house, and they say he wants to be driving in his coach and four through the village as you are all going out—now I wouldn't for any thing he had that triumph over us."

"Thank you, good John," said Mr. Percy, "but such triumphs cannot mortify us."

Poor John reluctantly opened the gate and let the carriage pass—they drove on—they cast a lingering look behind as they quitted the park—

——"Must I then leave thee, Paradise?"

As they passed through the village the poor people came out of their houses to take leave of their excellent landlord; they flocked round the carriage, and hung upon it, till it stopped, and then, with one voice, they poured forth praises, and blessings, and prayers for better days. Just at this moment Sir Robert Percy made his appearance. His equipage was splendid; his coachman drove his four fine horses down the street, the middle of which was cleared in an instant. The crowd gazed at the show as it passed—Sir Robert gave a signal to his coachman to drive slower, that he might longer enjoy the triumph—he put his head out of the coach window, but no one cried, "God bless him!" His insolence was obviously mortified as he passed the Percy family, for Mr. Percy bowed with an air of dignity and cheerfulness which seemed to say, "My fortune is yours—but I am still myself." Some of the spectators clapped their hands, and some wept.

Mr. Percy seemed to have prepared his mind for every circumstance of his departure, and to be perfectly composed, or at least master of his feelings; but a small incident, which had not been foreseen, suddenly moved him almost to tears; as they crossed the bridge, which was at the farthest end of the village, they heard the muffled bells of the church toll as if for a public calamity.* Instantly recollecting the resentment to which these

* On Mr. Morris's departure from Piercefield the same circumstance happened.

poor people were exposing themselves by this mark of their affection and regret, Mr. Percy went by a short path to the church as quickly as possible, and had the bells unmuffled.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Percy fortunately possessed, independently of the Percy estate, a farm worth about seven or eight hundred a year, which he had purchased with part of his wife's fortune; on which he had built a lodge, that he had intended for the future residence of one of his sons. *The Hills*, was the name of this lodge, to which all the family now retired. Though it was in the same county with Percy-hall, Clermont-park, Falconer-court, Hungerford-castle, and within reach of several other gentlemen's seats, yet from its being in a hilly part of the country, through which no regular road had been made, it was little frequented, and gave the idea, not only of complete retirement, but of remoteness. Though a lonely situation, it was, however, a beautiful one. The house stood on the brow of a hill, and looked into a deep glen, through the steep descent of which ran a clear and copious rivulet rolling over a stony bed; the rocks were covered with mountain flowers and wild shrubs—But nothing is more tiresome than a picture in prose: we shall therefore beg our readers to recall to their imagination some of the views they may have seen in Wales, and they will probably have a better idea of this place than any that we could give by the most laboured description, amplified with all the epithets in the English language.

The house at the Hills, though finished, was yet but scantily furnished, and was so small that it could hardly hold the family who were now obliged to take refuge in it. However, they were disposed to accommodate each other: they had habits of order, and had so little accustomed themselves to be waited upon, that this sudden change in their fortune and way of life did not appear terrible, as it would to many in the same rank. Undoubtedly they felt the loss of real conveniences,

but they were not tormented with ideal wants, or with the pangs of mortified vanity. Evils they had to bear, but they were not the most dreadful of all evils—those of the imagination.

Mr. Percy, to whom his whole family looked for counsel and support, now showed all the energy and decision of his character. What he knew must be done sooner or later he did decidedly at first. The superfluities to which his family had been accustomed were instantly abandoned. The great torment of decayed gentry is the remembrance of their former station, and a weak desire still to appear what their fortune no longer allows them to be. This folly Mr. Percy had not to combat in his family, where all were eager to resign even more of their own comforts than the occasion required. It was the object now for the family who were at home to live as frugally as possible, that they might save as much of their small income as they could, to assist and forward the sons in their professions.

The eldest son, Godfrey, could not yet have heard of the change in his father's fortune, and in his own expectations; but from a passage in his last letter, it was evident that he had some idea of the possibility of such a reverse, and that he was preparing himself to live with economy. From Alfred and Erasmus Mr. Percy had, at this trying time, the satisfaction of receiving at once the kindest and the most manly letters, containing strong expressions of gratitude to their father for having given them such an education as would enable them, notwithstanding the loss of hereditary fortune, to become independent and respectable. What would have been the difference of their fate, and of their feelings, had they been suffered to grow up into mere idle lounging gentlemen, or four-in-hand coachmen! In different words, but with the same spirit, both brothers declared that this change in the circumstances of their family did not depress their minds; but, on the contrary, gave them new and powerful motives for exertion. It seemed to be the first wish of their souls to fulfil the fond hopes and predictions of their father, and to make some return for the care their parents had taken of their education.

Their father, pleased by the sanguine hopes and ardent spirit expressed in their letters, was however sensible that a considerable time must elapse before they could make any thing by law or medicine. They were as yet

only in the outset of their professions, the difficult beginning, when men must toil often without reward, be subject to crosses and losses, and rebukes and rebuffs, when their rivals push them back, and when they want the assistance of friends to help them forward, while with scarcely the means to live they must appear like gentlemen.

Besides the faithful steward, two servants, who were much attached to the family, accompanied them to their retirement. One was Mrs. Harte, who had lived with Mrs. Percy above thirty years; and who, from being a housekeeper with handsome wages and plenary power over a numerous household at Percy-hall, now served with increased zeal at the Hills, doing a great part of the work of the house herself, with the assistance only of a stout country girl newly hired, whose awkwardness and ignorance, or, as Mrs. Harte expressed it, whose *comical ways*, she bore with a patience that cost her more than all the rest. The other servant who followed the altered fortunes of the Percy family was a young man of the name of Johnson, whom Mr. Percy had bred up from a boy, and who was so creditable a servant that he could readily have obtained a place with high wages in any opulent family, either in the country or in London; but he chose to abide by his master, who could now only afford to give him very little. Indeed, Mr. Percy would not have kept any man-servant in his present circumstances, but out of regard for this young man, who seemed miserable at the thoughts of leaving him, and who undertook to make himself useful in the farm as well as in the house.

Very different was Johnson from the present race of *fine* town servants, who follow with no unequal steps the follies and vices of their *betters;* and who, by their insolence and extravagance, become the just torments of their masters. Very different was Johnson from some country servants, who with gross selfishness look solely to their own eating and drinking, and whose only thought is how to swallow as much and do as little as possible.

As soon as he had settled his home, Mr. Percy looked abroad to a tract of improveable ground, on which he might employ his agricultural skill. He had reason to rejoice in having really led the life of a country gentleman. He understood country business, and he was ably

assisted in all the details of farming and management. Never, in the most prosperous days, did the old steward seem so fully interested in his master's affairs, so punctual and active in executing his commands, and, above all, so respectful in his manner to his master, as now in his fallen fortunes.

It would be uninteresting to readers who are not farmers to enter into a detail of Mr. Percy's probable improvements. It is enough to say, that his hopes were founded upon experience, and that he was a man capable of calculating. He had been long in the habit of keeping accurate accounts, not such as gentlemen display when they are pleased to prove that their farm produces more than ever farm produced before. All the tradesmen with whom he had dealt were, notwithstanding his change of fortune, ready to trust him; and those who were strangers, finding themselves regularly paid, soon acquired confidence in his punctuality. So that, far from being terrified at having so little, he felt surprised at having still so much money at his command. —The enjoyment of high credit must surely give more pleasurable feelings than the mere possession of wealth.

Often, during the first year after he had been deprived of the Percy estate, Mr. Percy declared, that, as to himself, he had actually lost nothing; for he had never been expensive or luxurious, his personal enjoyments were nearly the same, and his active pursuits were not very different from what they had always been. He had, it is true, less time than he wished to give to literature, or to indulge in the company and conversation of his wife and daughters; but even the pain of this privation was compensated by the pleasure he felt in observing the excellences in their characters which adversity developed.—It has by some persons been thought, that women who have been suffered to acquire literary tastes, whose understandings have been cultivated and refined, are apt to disdain or to become unfit for the useful minutiæ of domestic duties. In the education of her daughters, Mrs. Percy had guarded against this danger, and she now experienced the happy effects of her prudence. At first they had felt it somewhat irksome, in their change of circumstances, to be forced to spend a considerable portion of their time in preparations for the mere business of living; but they perceived

that this constraint gave a new spring to their minds, and a higher relish to their favourite employments. After the domestic business of the day was done, they enjoyed, with fresh delight, the pleasures of which it is not in the power of fortune to deprive us.

Soon after the family were settled at the Hills, they were surprised by a visit from Commissioner Falconer —*surprised*, because, though they knew that he had a certain degree of commonplace friendship for them as relations, yet they were aware that his regard was not independent of fortune, and they had never supposed that he would come to seek them in their retirement. After some general expressions of condolence on their losses, their change of situation, and the inconveniences to which a large family, bred up, as they had been, in affluence, must suffer in their present abode, he went out to walk with Mr. Percy, and he then began to talk over his own family affairs. With polite acknowledgment to Mr. Percy of the advantage he had derived from his introduction to Lord Oldborough, and with modestly implied compliments to his own address in turning that introduction to the best possible account, Mr. Falconer led to the subject on which he wanted to dilate.

"You see, my dear Mr. Percy," said he, "without vanity I may now venture to say, my plans for advancing my family have all succeeded; my sons have risen in the world, or rather have been pushed up, beyond my most sanguine hopes."

"I give you joy with all my heart," said Mr. Percy.

"But, my good sir, listen to me; your sons might have been in as advantageous situations, if you had not been too proud to profit by the evidently favourable dispositions which Lord Oldborough showed towards you and yours."

"Too proud! No, my friend, I assure you, pride never influenced my conduct—I acted from principle."

"So you are pleased to call it. But we will not go back to the past—no man likes to acknowledge he has been wrong. Let us, if you please, look to the future. You know that you are now in a different situation from what you were formerly, when you could afford to follow your principles or your systems. Now, my dear sir, give me leave to tell you that it is your duty, absolutely your duty, to make use of your interest for your sons. There is not a man in England, who, if he

chose it, might secure for his sons a better patron than you could."

"I trust," replied Mr. Percy, "that I have secured for my sons what is better than a good patron—a good education."

"Both are best," said Mr. Falconer. "Proud as you are, cousin Percy, you must allow this, when you look round and see who rises, and how. And, now we are by ourselves, let me ask you, frankly and seriously, why do not you try to establish your sons by patronage?"

"Frankly and seriously, then, because I detest and despise the whole system of patronage."

"That's very *strong*," said Mr. Falconer. "And I am glad, for your sake, and for the sake of your family, that nobody heard it but myself."

"If the whole world heard me," pursued Mr. Percy, "I should say just the same. *Strong*—very strong!—I am glad of it; for (excuse me, you are my relation, and we are on terms of familiarity) the delicate, guarded, qualifying, trimming, mincing, pouncet-box, gentleman-usher mode of speaking truth, makes no sort of impression. Truth should always be strong—speaking or acting."

"Well, well, I beg your pardon; as strong let it be as you please, only let it be cool, and then we cannot fail to understand one another. I think you were going to explain to me why you detest and despise what you call the system of patronage."

"Because I believe it to be ruinous to my country. Whenever the honours of professions, civil, military, or ecclesiastical, are bestowed by favour, not earned by merit—whenever the places of trust and dignity in a state are to be gained by intrigue and solicitation—there is an end of generous emulation, and consequently of exertion. Talents and integrity, in losing their reward of glory, lose their vigour, and often their very existence. If the affairs of this nation were guided, and if her battles were fought, by the corrupt, imbecile creatures of patronage, how would they be guided?—how fought?—Wo be to the country that trusts to such rulers and such defenders! Wo has been to every country that has so trusted!—May such never be the fate of England!—And that it never may, let every honest independent Englishman set his face, his hand, his

heart, against this base, this ruinous system!—I will for one."

"For one!—alas!" said Mr. Falconer, with a sigh meant to be heard, and a smile not intended to be seen, "what can *one* do in such a desperate case? I am afraid certain things will go on in the world for ever, whether we profit by them or not. And if I grant that patronage is sometimes a public evil, you must allow that it is often a private benefit."

"I doubt even that," said Mr. Percy; "for those young men who are brought up to expect patronage in any profession—But," said Mr. Percy, checking himself, "I forgot who I am speaking to: I don't wish to say any thing that can hurt your feelings, especially when you are so kind to come to see me in adversity, and when you show so much interest in my affairs."

"Oh! pray go on, go on," said the commissioner, smiling, "you will not hurt me, I assure you: consider, I am too firm in the success of my system to be easily offended on that point—go on!—Those young men who are brought up to expect patronage in any profession—"

"Are apt to depend upon it too much," continued Mr. Percy, "and consequently neglect to acquire knowledge. They know that things will be passed over for them, and they think that they need not be assiduous, because they are secure of being provided for, independently of their own exertions; and if they have a turn for extravagance, they may indulge it, because a place will set all to rights."

"And if they are provided for, and if they do get good places, are they not well enough off?" said Mr. Falconer: "I'll answer for it, your sons would think so."

Mr. Percy, with a look of proud humility, replied, "I am inclined to believe that my sons would not think themselves *well off*, unless they were distinguished by their own merit."

"To be sure," said Mr. Falconer, correcting himself; "of course I mean that too: but a young man can never distinguish himself, you know, so well as when his merit is raised to a conspicuous situation."

"Or disgrace himself so effectually, as when he is raised to a situation for which he is unprepared and unfit."

The commissioner's brow clouded—some unpleasant reflection or apprehension seemed to cross his mind. Mr. Percy had no intention of raising any; he meant no allusion to the commissioner's sons—he hastened to turn what he had said more decidedly upon his own.

"I have chosen for my sons, or rather they have chosen for themselves," continued he, "professions which are independent of influence, and in which it could be of little use to them. Patrons can be of little advantage to a lawyer or a physician. No judge, no attorney can push a lawyer up, beyond a certain point—he may rise like a rocket, but he will fall like the stick, if he be not supported by his own inherent powers. Where property or life is at stake, men will not compliment or even be influenced by great recommendations—they will consult the best lawyer, and the best physician, whoever he may be. I have endeavoured to give my Alfred and Erasmus such an education as shall enable them honestly to work their own way to eminence."

"A friend's helping hand is no bad thing," said Mr. Falconer, "in that hard and slippery ascent."

"As many friends, as many helping hands, in a fair way, as you please," said Mr. Percy: "I by no means would inculcate the anti-social, absurd, impossible doctrine, that young men, or any men, can or ought to be independent of the world. Let my sons make friends for themselves, and enjoy the advantage of mine. I object only to their becoming dependent, wasting the best years of their lives in a miserable, debasing servitude to patrons—to patrons who at last may perhaps capriciously desert them at their utmost need."

Again, without designing it, Mr. Percy wakened unpleasant recollections in the mind of the commissioner.

"Ah! there you touch a tender string with me," said Mr. Falconer, sighing. "I have known something of that in my life. Lord N—— and Mr. G—— did indeed use me shamefully ill. But I was young then, and did not choose my friends well. I know more of the world now, and have done better for my sons—and shall do better, I trust, for myself. In the mean time, my dear Mr. Percy, let us think of your affairs. Such a man as you should not be lost here on a farm among turnips

and carrots. So Lord Oldborough says and thinks—and, in short, to come to the point at once, I was not sounding you from idle curiosity respecting patronage, or from any impertinent desire to interfere with your concerns; but I come, commissioned by Lord Oldborough, to make an offer, which, I am persuaded, whatever theoretical objections might occur," said the commissioner, with a significant smile, "Mr. Percy is too much a man of practical sense to reject. Lord Oldborough empowers me to say, that it is his wish to see his government supported and strengthened by men of Mr. Percy's talents and character; that he is persuaded that Mr. Percy would speak well in parliament; that if Mr. Percy will join *us*, his lordship will bring him into parliament, and give him thus an opportunity of at once distinguishing himself, advancing his family, repairing the injustice of fortune, and serving his country."

Commissioner Falconer made this offer with much pomposity, with the air of a person sure that he is saying something infinitely flattering, and at the same time with a lurking smile on his countenance, at the idea of the ease and certainty with which this offer would induce Mr. Percy to recant all he had said against patrons and patronage. He was curious to hear how the philosopher would change his tone; but, to his surprise, Mr. Percy did not alter it in the least.

He returned his respectful and grateful acknowledgments to Lord Oldborough, but begged leave totally to decline the honour intended him; he could not, he said, accept it consistently with his principles—he could not go into parliament with a view to advance himself or to provide for his family.

The commissioner interrupted to *qualify*, for he was afraid he had spoken too broadly, and observed that what he had said was quite confidential.

Mr. Percy understood it so, and assured him there was no danger that it should be repeated. The commissioner was then in a state to listen again quietly.

Mr. Percy said, that when he was rich, he had preferred domestic happiness to ambition, therefore he had never stood for the county to which he belonged; that now he was poor, he felt an additional reason for keeping out of parliament, that he might not put himself in a situation to be tempted—a situation where he must

spend more than he could afford, and could only pay his expenses by selling his conscience.

The commissioner was silent with astonishment for some moments after Mr. Percy ceased speaking. He had always thought his good cousin a singular man, but he had never thought him a wrong-headed fool till this moment. At first he was somewhat vexed, for Mr. Percy's sake and for the sake of his sons, that he refused such an offer—for the commissioner had some of the feelings of a relation—but more the habits of a politician, and these last, in a few moments, reconciled him to what he thought the ruin of his cousin's prospects in life. Mr. Falconer considered, that if Mr. Percy were to go into parliament to join their party, and to get near Lord Oldborough, he might become a dangerous rival. He pressed the matter, therefore, no longer with urgency, but only just sufficient to enable him to report to Lord Oldborough that he had executed his commission, but had found Mr. Percy *impracticable*.

CHAPTER XIII.

However sincere the general pity and esteem for the Percy family, they did not escape the common lot of mortality; they had their share of blame, as well as of condolence, from their friends and acquaintance. Some discovered that all the misfortunes of the family might have been avoided, if they had listened to good advice; others were quite clear that the lawsuit would have been decided in Mr. Percy's favour, if he had employed their solicitor or their barrister; or, in short, if every step of the suit had been directed differently.

Commissioner Falconer now joined the band of reproaching friends. He did not blame Mr. Percy, however, for the conduct of the lawsuit, for of that he confessed himself to be no judge, but he thought he understood the right way of advancing a family in the world; and on this subject he now took a higher tone than he had formerly felt himself entitled to assume. Success gives such rights—especially over the unfortunate. The

commissioner said loudly in all companies, that he had hoped his relation, Mr. Percy, who certainly was a man of talents, and he was convinced well-intentioned, would not have shown himself so obstinately attached to his peculiar opinions—especially to his strange notions of independence, which must disgust, ultimately, friends whom it was most the interest of his family to please; that he doubted not that the young men of the Percy family bitterly regretted that their father would not avail himself of the advantages of his connexions, of the favourable dispositions, and, to his knowledge, most *condescending* offers that had been made to him—offers which, the commissioner said, he must term really condescending, when he considered that Mr. Percy had never paid the common court that was expected by a minister. Other circumstances, too, enhanced the favour: offence had undoubtedly been given by the ill-timed, injudicious interference of Captain Godfrey Percy about regimental business—some Major Gascoigne—yet, notwithstanding this, a certain person, whose steadiness in his friendships the commissioner declared he could never sufficiently admire, had not, for the son's errors, changed his favourable opinion or disposition towards the father.

Mr. Falconer concluded, with a sigh, "There are some men whom the best of friends cannot serve—and such we can only leave to their fate."

The commissioner, now considering Mr. Percy as a person so obstinately odd that it was unsafe for a rising man to have any thing more to do with him, it was agreed in the Falconer family that it was necessary to let the Percys drop—gently, without making any noise. Mrs. Falconer and her daughters, having always resided in London during the winter, and at some watering-place in summer, knew scarcely any thing of the female part of the Percy family. Mrs. Falconer had occasionally met Mrs. Percy; but the young ladies, who had not yet been in town, she had never seen since they were children. Mrs. Falconer now considered this as a peculiarly fortunate circumstance, because she should not be blamed for *cutting* them, and should escape all the *unpleasantness* of breaking off an intimacy with relations.

The commissioner acceded to all his lady's observations, and easily shook off that attachment, which he had professed for so many years, perhaps felt, for his

good cousin Percy—perhaps felt, we say: because we really believe that he was attached to Mr. Percy while that gentleman was in prosperity. There are persons who have an exclusive sympathy with the prosperous.

There was one, however, who, in this respect, felt differently from the rest of the family. Buckhurst Falconer, with a generous impulse of affection and gratitude, declared that he would not desert Mr. Percy or any of the family in adversity; he could never forget how kind they had been to him when he was in distress. Buckhurst's resentment against Caroline for her repeated refusals suddenly subsided; his attachment revived with redoubled force. He protested that he loved her the better for having lost her fortune, and he reiterated this protestation more loudly, because his father declared it was absurd and ridiculous. The son persisted, till the father, though not subject to make violent resolutions, was wrought to such a pitch as to swear, that if Buckhurst should be fool enough to think seriously of a girl who was now a beggar, he would absolutely refuse his consent to the match, and would never give his son a shilling.

Buckhurst immediately wrote to Caroline a passionate declaration of the constancy and ardour of his attachment, and entreated her permission to wait upon her immediately.

"Do not sacrifice me," said Buckhurst, "to idle niceties. That I have many faults I am conscious; but none, I trust, for which you ought utterly to condemn me—none but what you can cure. I am ready to be every thing which you approve. Give me but leave to hope. There is no sacrifice I will not make to facilitate, to expedite our union. I have been ordained, one living I possess, and that which Colonel Hauton has promised me will soon come into my possession. Believe me, I was decided to go into the church by my attachment—to my passion for you every scruple, every consideration gave way. As to the rest, I shall never be deterred from following the dictates of my heart by the opposition of ambitious parents. Caroline, do not sacrifice me to idle niceties—I know I have the misfortune not to please your brother Alfred: to do him justice, he has fairly told me that he does not think me worthy of *his sister Caroline*. I forgive him, I admire him for the pride with which he pronounces the words, *my sister*

Caroline. But though she may easily find a more faultless character, she will never find a warmer heart, or one more truly, more ardently attached."

There was something frank, warm, and generous in this letter, which pleased Rosamond, and which, she said, justified her good opinion of Buckhurst. Indeed, the great merit of being ardently attached to her sister Caroline was sufficient, in Rosamond's eyes, to cover a multitude of sins: and the contrast between his warmth at this moment, and the coldness of the rest of his family, struck her forcibly. Rosamond thought that Alfred had been too severe in his judgment, and observed that it was in vain to look with a lantern all over the world for a faultless character—a monster! It was quite sufficient if a woman could find an honest man—that she was sure Buckhurst had no faults but what love would cure.

"But love has not cured him of any yet," said Caroline.

"Try marriage," said Rosamond, laughing.

Caroline shook her head. "Consider at what expense that trial must be made."

At the first reading of Buckhurst's letter Caroline had been pleased with it; but on a second perusal, she was dissatisfied with the passage about his parents, nor could she approve of his giving up what he now called his *scruples*, to obtain a competence for the woman he professed to adore. She knew that he had been leading a dissipated life in town; that he must, therefore, be less fit than he formerly was to make a good husband, and still less likely to make a respectable clergyman. He had some right feeling, but no steady principle, as Caroline observed. She was grateful for the constancy of his attachment, and for the generosity he showed in his whole conduct towards her; nor was she insensible to the urgency with which Rosamond pleaded in his favour: but she was firm in her own judgment; and her refusal, though expressed in the terms that could best soften the pain it must give, was as decided as possible.

Soon after her letter had been sent, she and Rosamond had taken a longer walk one evening than usual, and, eager in conversation, went on so far in this wild unfrequented part of the country, that when they saw the sun setting they began to fear they should not reach home before it was dark. They wished to find a shorter

way than that by which they went, and they looked about in hopes of seeing some labourer (some *swinked hedger*) returning from his work, or a cottage where they could meet with a guide.—But there was no person or house within sight. At last Caroline, who had climbed upon a high bank in the lane where they were walking, saw a smoke rising between some trees at a little distance; and towards this spot they made their way through another lane, the entrance to which had been stopped up with furze bushes. They soon came within sight of a poor-looking cottage, and saw a young woman walking very slowly with a child in her arms. She was going towards the house, and did not perceive the young ladies till they were close to her. She turned suddenly when they spoke—started—looked frightened and confused; the infant began to cry, and hushing it as well as she could, she answered to their questions with a bewildered look, "I don't know indeed—I can't tell—I don't know any thing, ladies—ask at the cottage, yonder." Then she quickened her pace, and walked so fast to the house that they could hardly keep up with her. She pushed open the hatch door, and called "Dorothy! Dorothy, come out." But no Dorothy answered.—The young woman seemed at a loss what to do; and as she stood hesitating, her face, which had at first appeared pale and emaciated, flushed up to her temples. She looked very handsome, but in ill health.

"Be pleased, ladies," said she, with diffidence, and trembling from head to foot, "be pleased to sit down and rest, ladies. One will be in directly who knows the ways—I am a stranger in these parts."

As soon as she had set the chairs, she was retiring to an inner room, but her child, who was pleased with Caroline's face as she smiled and nodded at him, stretched out his little hands towards her.

"Oh! let my sister give him a kiss," said Rosamond. The mother stopped, yet appeared unwilling. The child patted Caroline's cheek, played with her hair, and laughed aloud. Caroline offered to take the child in her arms, but the mother held him fast, and escaped into the inner room, where they heard her sobbing violently. Caroline and Rosamond looked at one another in silence, and left the cottage by tacit consent, sorry that they had given pain, and feeling that they had no right to intrude further. "We can go home the same

way that we came," said Caroline, "and that is better than to trouble anybody."

"Certainly," said Rosamond: "yet I should like to know something more about this poor woman, if I could, without—If we happened to meet Dorothy, whoever she is."

At this instant they saw an old woman come from a copse near the cottage, with a bundle of sticks on her back and a tin can in her hand: this was Dorothy. She saved them all the trouble and delicacy of asking questions, for there was not a more communicative creature breathing. She in the first place threw down her fagots, and offered her service to guide the young ladies home; she guessed they belonged to the family that was newly come to settle at the Hills, which she described, though she could not tell the name. She would not be denied the pleasure of showing them the shortest and safest way, and the only way by which they could get home before it was night-fall. So they accepted her kind offer, and she trudged on, talking as she went.

"It is a weary thing, ladies, to live in this lone place, where one does not see a soul to speak to from one month's end to another—especially to me that has lived afore now, in my younger days, in Lon'on. But it's as God pleases! and I wish none had greater troubles in this world than I—You were up at the house, ladies! There within at my little place—ay—then you saw the greatest and the only great trouble I have, or ever had in this life. Did not you, ladies, see the young woman with the child in her arms!—But maybe you did not mind Kate, and she's nothing now to look at, quite faded and gone, though she's only one month past nineteen years of age. I am sure I ought to know, for I was at her christening, and nursed her mother. She's of very good parentage, that is, of a farmer's family, that *has*, as well as his neighbours, that live a great way off, quite on the other side of the country. And not a year, at least not a year and a half ago, I remember Kate Robinson dancing on the green at Squire Burton's there, with the rest of the girls of the village, and without compare the prettiest and freshest, and most blithsome and innocent of them all. Ay, she was innocent then, none ever more so, and she had no care, but all looking kind upon her in this world, and fond parents

taking pride in her—and now look at her what she is! Cast off by all, shamed, and forgotten, and broken-hearted, and lost as much as if she was in her grave. And better she was in her grave than as she is."

The old woman now really felt so much that she stopped speaking, and she was silent for several minutes.

"Ah! dear ladies," said she, looking up at Rosamond and Caroline, "I see you have kind hearts within you, and I thank you for pitying poor Kate."

"I wish we could do any thing to serve her," said Caroline.

"Ah! miss, that I am afraid you can't—that's what I am afraid none can now." The good woman paused, and looked as if she expected to be questioned. Caroline was silent, and the old woman looked disappointed.

"We do not like to question you," said Rosamond, "lest we should ask what you might not like to answer, or what the young woman would be sorry that you should answer."

"Why, miss, that's very considerate in you, and only that I know it would be for her benefit, I am sure I would not have said a word—but here I have so very little to give her, and that little so coarse fare to what she has been used to, both when she was at service, and when she was with her own people, that I be afraid, weak as she be grown now, she won't do. And though I have been a good nurse in my day, I think she wants now a bit better doctor than I be—and then if she could see the minister, to take the weight off her heart, to make her not fret so, to bid her look up above for comfort, and to raise her with the hope and trust that God will have more mercy upon her than her father and mother do have; and to make her—hardest of all!—forget him that has forsaken her and her little one, and been so cruel—Oh! ladies, to do all that, needs a person that can speak to her better and with more authority than I can."

The poor woman stopped again for some minutes, and then recollecting that she had not told what she had intended to tell, she said, "I suppose, ladies, you guess now how it be, and I ought to beg pardon for speaking of such a thing or such a one as—as poor Kate is now, to you, young ladies; but though she is fallen so low

and an outcast, she is not hardened; and if it had been so that it had pleased Heaven that she had been a wife to one in her own condition—Oh! what a wife and what a mother there was lost in her! The man that wronged her has a deal to answer for. But he has no thought of that, nor care for her, or his child; but he is a fine man about Lon'on, they say, driving about with colonels, and lords, and dancing with ladies. Oh! if they saw Kate, one would guess they would not think so much of him: but yet, maybe, they'd think more—there's no saying how the quality ladies judge on these matters. But this I know, that though he was very free of his money, and generous to Kate at the first, and even for some months after he quit the country, till I suppose he forgot her, yet he has not sent her a guinea for self or child these four months, nor a line of a letter of any kind, which she pined for more, and we kept thinking the letters she did write did not get to him by the post, so we sent one by a grandson of my own, that we knowed would put the letter safe into his hands, and did, just as the young gentleman was, as my grandson told me, coming out of a fine house in Lon'on, and going, with a long whip in his hand, to get upon the coach-box of a coach, with four horses too—and he looks at the letter, and puts it in his pocket, and calls to my boy, 'No answer now, my good friend—but I'll write by post to her.' Those were the very words; and then that colonel that was with him, laughing and making game like, went to snatch the letter out of his pocket, saying, 'Show us that love-letter, Buckhurst,'—Lord forgive me! What have I done now?" said the old woman, stopping short, struck by the sudden change in the countenance of both her auditors.

"Mr. Buckhurst Falconer is a relation of ours," said Rosamond.

"Dear ladies, how could I think you knew him even?" interrupted the old woman. "I beg your pardon. Kate says he's not so cruel as he seems, and that if he were here this minute, he'd be as kind and generous to her as ever. It's all forgetfulness just, and giddiness, she says; or maybe, as to the money, that he has not it to spare."

"To spare!" repeated Caroline, indignantly.

"Lord love her! what a colour she has now—and what a spirit spoke there! But, ladies, I'd be sorry to

hurt the young gentleman; for Kate would be angry at me for that worse than at any thing. And as to all that has happened, you know it's nothing extraordinary, but what happens every day, by all accounts; and young gentlemen, such as he be, thinks nothing of it; and the great ladies, I know, by what I noticed when I was in sarvice once in Lon'on myself, the great ladies thinks the better of them for such things."

"I am not a great lady," said Caroline.

"Nor I, thank God!" said Rosamond.

"Well, for certain, if you are not great, you're good ladies," said the old woman.

As they were now within sight of their own house, they thanked and dismissed their loquacious but kind-hearted guide, putting into her hand some money for poor Kate, Caroline promising to make further inquiries —Rosamond, without restriction, promising all manner of assistance, pecuniary, medical, and spiritual.

The result of the inquiries that were made confirmed the truth of all that old Dorothy had related, and brought to light other circumstances relative to the seduction and desertion of this poor girl, which so shocked Rosamond, that in proportion to her former prepossession in Buckhurst's favour was now her abhorrence; and as if to repair the imprudence with which she had formerly used her influence over her sister's mind in his favour, she now went as far on the opposite side, abjuring him with the strongest expressions of indignation, and wishing that Caroline's last letter had not gone to Buckhurst, that she might have given her refusal on this special account, in the most severe and indignant terms the English language could supply.

Mrs. Percy, however, on the contrary, rejoiced that Caroline's letter had been sent before they knew any thing of this affair.

"But, ma'am," cried Rosamond, "surely it would have been right for Caroline to have given this reason for her refusal, and to have declared that this had proved to her beyond a possibility of doubt that her former objections to Mr. Buckhurst Falconer's principles were too well founded; and it would have become Caroline to have written with strong indignation. I am persuaded," continued Rosamond, "that if women would reprobate young men for such instances of profligacy and cruelty, instead of suffering such conduct to go

under the fine plausible general names of gallantry and *wildness*, it would make a greater impression than all the sermons that could be preached. And Caroline, who has beauty and eloquence, *can* do this with effect. I remember Godfrey once said, that the peculiar characteristic of Caroline, that in which she differed most from the common herd of young ladies, is in her power of feeling and expressing virtuous indignation. I am sure that Godfrey, partial as he is to Mr. Buckhurst Falconer, would think that Caroline ought, on such an occasion, to set an example of that proper spirit which, superior to the fear of ridicule and fashion, dares to speak the indignation it feels."

"Very well spoken, and better felt, my dear daughter," said Mrs. Percy. "And Heaven forbid I should lower the tone of your mind, or your honest indignation against vice; but, Rosamond, my dear, let us be just. I must do even those whom Godfrey calls the common herd of young ladies the justice to believe that there are many among them who have good feeling enough to be angry, very angry, with a lover upon *such an occasion*—angry enough to write him a most indignant, and, perhaps, very eloquent letter. You may recollect more than one heroine of a novel, who discards a lover upon such a discovery as was made by you last night. It is a common novel incident, and, of course, from novels every young lady, even, who might not have *felt* without a precedent, knows how she ought to express herself in such circumstances. But you will observe, my dear, that both in novels and in real life, young ladies generally like and encourage men of feeling in contradistinction to men of principle, and too often men of gallantry in preference to men of correct morals: in short, that such a character as that of Mr. Buckhurst Falconer is just the kind of person with whom many women would fall in love. By suffering this to be thought the taste of our sex, ladies encourage libertinism in general, more than they can possibly discourage it by the loudest display of indignation against particular instances. If, like your sister Caroline, young ladies would show that they really do not prefer such men, it would do essential service. And, observe my dear Rosamond, this can be done by every young woman with perfect delicacy: but I do not see how she can, with propriety or good effect, do more. It is a subject ladies

cannot well discuss; a subject upon which the manners and customs of the world are so much at variance with religion and morality, that entering upon the discussion would lead to greater difficulties than you are aware of. It is, therefore, best for our sex to show their disapprobation of vice, and to prove their sense of virtue and religion, by their conduct, rather than to proclaim it to the world in words. Had Caroline in her letter expressed her indignation in the most severe terms that the English language could supply, she would only have exposed herself to the ridicule of Mr. Buckhurst Falconer's fashionable companions, as a prating, preaching prude, without doing the least good to him, or to any one living."

Rosamond reluctantly acknowledged that perhaps her mother was right.

"But, Caroline, how quietly you sit by, while we are talking of you and your lover!" cried Rosamond; "I do not know whether to be provoked with you or to admire you."

"Admire me, pray," said Caroline, "if you can."

"I do not believe you will ever be in love," said Rosamond. "I confess I should admire, or, at least, love you better, if you had more feeling," added Rosamond, hastily.

"By what do you judge that I want feeling?" said Caroline, colouring deeply, and with a look and tone that expressed her keen sense of injustice. "What proof have I ever given you of my want of feeling?"

"No proof, that I can recollect," said Rosamond, laughing, "no proof, but that you have never been in love."

"Is it a proof I am incapable of feeling, that I have not been in love with one who has proved himself utterly unworthy of my esteem—against whose conduct my sister cannot find words sufficiently severe to express her indignation? Rosamond, my mind inclined towards him at the first reading of his last letter; but if I had ever given him any encouragement, if I had loved him, what would be my misery at this moment!"

"Ah! my dear, but then if you had been very miserable, I should have pitied you so much, and loved you so heartily, for being in love," said Rosamond, still laughing—

"Oh! Rosamond," continued Caroline, whose mind

was now too highly wrought for raillery, "is love to be trifled with? No, only by trifling minds, or by rash characters, by those who do not conceive its power—its danger. Recollect what we have just seen: a young beautiful woman sinking into the grave with shame—deserted by her parents—wishing her child unborn. Do you remember her look of agony when we praised that child? the strongest charm of nature reversed—the strongest ties dissolved; and love brought her to this! She is only a poor servant-girl. But the highest and the fairest, those of the most cultivated understandings, of the tenderest hearts, cannot love bring them down to the same level—to the same fate? And not only our weak sex, but over the stronger sex, and the strongest of the strong, and the wisest of the wise, what is, what has ever been the power, the delusions of that passion, which can cast a spell over the greatest hero, throw a blot on the brightest glory, blast in a moment a life of fame! What must be the power of that passion, which can inspire genius in the dullest and the coldest, waken heroism in the most timid of creatures, exalt to the highest point, or to the lowest degrade our nature—the bitterest curse, or the sweetest blessing Heaven bestows on us in this life! Oh! sister, is love to be trifled with?"

Caroline paused, and Rosamond, for some instants, looked at her and at her mother in silence; then exclaimed, "All this from Caroline! Are not you astonished, mother?"

"No," said Mrs. Percy; "I was aware that this was in Caroline's mind."

"I was not," said Rosamond. "She who never spoke of love! I little imagined that she thought of it so highly, so seriously."

"Yes, I do think of it seriously, highly may Heaven grant!" cried Caroline, looking fervently upwards as she spoke with an illuminated countenance. "May Heaven grant that love be a blessing and not a curse to me! Heaven grant that I may never, in any moment of selfish vanity, try to excite a passion which I cannot return! Heaven grant that I never may feel the passion of love but for one whom I shall entirely esteem, who shall be worthy to fill my whole soul!"

"Mother," continued Caroline, turning eagerly, and seizing her mother's hand, "my guide, my guardian,

whenever you see in me any, the slightest inclination to coquetry, warn me—as you wish to save me from that which I should most dread, the reproaches of my own conscience—in the first, the very first instance, reprove me, mother, if you can—with severity. And you, my sister, my bosom friend, do not use your influence to soften, to open my mind to love; but if ever you perceive me yielding my heart to the first tenderness of the passion, watch over me, if the object be not every way worthy of me, my equal, my superior. Oh! as you would wish to snatch me from the grave, rouse me from the delusion—save me from disappointment, regret, remorse, which I know that I could not bear, and live."

Her mother, into whose arms she threw herself, pressed Caroline close to her heart, while Rosamond, to whom she had given her hand, held it fast, and stood motionless between surprise and sympathy. Caroline, to whose usual manners and disposition every thing theatrical or romantic was so foreign, seemed, as soon as she recollected herself, to be ashamed of the excessive emotion and enthusiasm she had shown: withdrawing her hand from her sister, she turned away, and left the room.

Her mother and sister both remained silent for a considerable time, fully occupied with their own thoughts and feelings. The mother's revery looked to the future prospects of her daughter; confident in Caroline's character, yet uncertain of her fate, she felt a pleasing yet painful solicitude.

Rosamond's thoughts turned rather to the past than to the future: she recollected and compared words and looks, yet found insuperable difficulty in connecting all she had ever before known or fancied of Caroline with what she had just seen and heard. Rosamond did not fairly recover from her surprise, and from her look of perplexity, during a full hour that she remained absolutely silent, poring upon a screen, upon which she saw nothing.

She then went in search of Caroline, in hopes of renewing the conversation; but she found her busied in some of the common affairs of life, and apparently a different person.

Rosamond, though she made divers attempts, could not lead Caroline back again to the same train of thought,

or tone of expression. Indeed, Rosamond did not attempt it very skilfully, but rather with the awkward impatience of one not accustomed to use address. Caroline, intent upon the means of assisting the poor young woman whom they had seen at the cottage, went there again as soon as she could, to warn old Dorothy, in the first place, to be less communicative, and not on any account to mention to any one else the names and circumstances which she had told them with so little reserve. Caroline next applied to Dr. Leicester, the vicar of their former parish, a most amiable and respectable clergyman, who had come from his vicarage, near Percy-hall, to spend what time he could spare from his duties with his favourite parishioners; at Caroline's request he willingly went to see this unhappy young woman, and succeeded in his endeavours to sooth and tranquillize her mind by speaking to her words of peace. His mild piety raised and comforted the trembling penitent; and while all prospect of forgiveness from her parents, or of happiness in this world, was at an end, he fixed her thoughts on those better hopes and promises which religion only can afford. Her health appeared suddenly to mend when her mind was more at ease: but this was only transient, and Dr. Percy, to whom Caroline applied for his medical opinion, gave little hopes of her recovery. All that could be done by medicine and proper kindness to assuage her sufferings during her decline was done in the best manner by Mrs. Percy and her daughters, especially by Caroline: the young woman, nevertheless, died in six weeks, and was buried without Buckhurst Falconer's making any inquiry concerning her, probably without his knowing of her death. A few days after she was no more, a letter came to her from him, which was returned unopened by Dorothy, who could just write well enough to make these words intelligible in the cover:

"Sir,

"Kate Robinson is dead—this four days—your child is with me still, and well. She bids me tell you, if ever you asked more concerning her—she left you her forgiveness on her deathbed, and hopes you will be happy, sir.

"Your humble servant,

"Dorothy White."

A bank-note of ten pounds was received by Dorothy soon afterward for the use of the child, and deep regret was expressed by the father for the death of its mother. But, as Dorothy said, "that came too late to be of any good to her."

CHAPTER XIV.

Soon after the death of poor Kate, the attention of the Percy family was taken up by a succession of different visits; some from their old neighbours and really affectionate friends, some from among the band of reproaching condolers. The first we shall mention, who partook of the nature of both these classes, was Lady Jane Granville: she was a sincere and warm friend, but a tormenting family adviser and director.

Her ladyship was nearly related to Mr. Percy, which gave her, on this occasion, rights of which she knew how to avail herself.

To do her justice, she was better qualified to be an adviser and protector than many who assume a familiar tone and character.

Lady Jane Granville was of high birth and fortune, had always lived in good company, had seen a great deal of the world, both abroad and at home; she had a complete knowledge of all that makes people well received in society, had generalized her observations, and had formed them into maxims of prudence and politeness, which redounded the more to her credit in conversation, as they were never committed to writing, and could, therefore, never be brought to the dangerous test of being printed and published. Her ladyship valued her own traditional wisdom and oral instruction beyond any thing that can be learned from books. She had acquired a *tact*, which, disclaiming and disdaining every regular process of reasoning, led her with admirable certainty to right conclusions in her own concerns, and thus in some degree justified the peremptory tone she assumed in advising others.

Though by no means pleased with Mr. and Mrs. Percy's answers to several of her letters of counsel,

yet she thought it her duty, as a friend and relation, to persevere. She invited herself to the Hills, where, with great difficulty, through scarcely practicable cross-roads, she arrived. She was so much fatigued and exhausted, in body and mind, that during the first evening she could talk of nothing but her hair-breadth escapes. The next morning after breakfast, she began with, "My dear Mr. Percy, now I have a moment's ease, I have a thousand things to say to you. I am very much surprised that you have thought fit to settle here, quite out of the world. Will you give me leave to speak my mind freely to you on the subject?"

"As freely as you please, my dear Lady Jane, upon any subject, if you will only promise not to be offended if we should not coincide in opinion."

"Certainly, certainly; I am sure I never expect or wish anybody to submit to my opinion, though I have had opportunities of seeing something of the world: but I assure you, that nothing but very particular regard would induce me to offer my advice. It is a maxim of mine, that family interference begins in ill-breeding and ends in impertinence; and accordingly it is a thing I have ever peculiarly avoided. But with a particular friend and near relation like you, my dear Mr. Percy, I think there ought to be an exception. Now, my dear sir, the young people have just left the room—I can take this opportunity of speaking freely: your daughters—what will you do with them?"

"Do with them! I beg pardon for repeating your ladyship's words, but I don't precisely understand your question."

"Well, precise sir, then, in other words, how do you mean to dispose of them?"

"I don't mean to dispose of them at all," said Mr. Percy.

"Then let me tell you, my good friend," said Lady Jane, with a most prophetic tone, "let me tell you, that you will live to repent that. You know I have seen something of the world—you ought to bring them forward, and make the most of their birth, family, and connexions, put them in a way of showing their accomplishments, make proper acquaintance, and obtain for your girls what I call the patronage of fashion."

"Patronage!" repeated Mr. Percy: "it seems to be my doom to hear of nothing but patronage, whichever

way I turn. What! patronage for my daughters as well as for my sons!"

"Yes," said Lady Jane, "and look to it; for your daughters will never go on without it. Upon their first coming out, you should—" Here her ladyship stopped short, for Caroline and Rosamond returned. "Oh! go on, go on, let me beg of your ladyship," said Mr. Percy: "why should not my daughters have the advantage of hearing what you are saying?"

"Well, then, I will tell them candidly that upon their first *coming out*, it will be an inconceivable advantage, whatever you may think of it, to have the patronage of fashion. Every day, we see many an ugly face, many a mere simpleton, many a girl who had nothing upon earth but her dress, become quite charming, when the radiance of fashion is upon them. And there are some people who can throw this radiance where and on whom they please, just as easily," said Lady Jane, playing with a spoon she held in her hand, "just as easily as I throw the sunshine now upon this object and now upon that, now upon Caroline and now upon Rosamond. And, observe, no eye turns upon the beauteous Caroline now, because she is left in the shade."

It was Mr. Percy's policy to allow Lady Jane full liberty to finish all she wished to say without interruption; for when people are interrupted, they imagine they have much more to add. Let them go on, and they come to the end of their sense, and even of their words, sooner than they or you could probably expect.

"Now," continued her ladyship, "to apply to living examples; you know Mrs. Paul Cotterel?"

"No."

"Well!—Lady Peppercorn?"

"No."

"Nor the Miss Blissets?"

"No."

"That is the misfortune of living so much out of the world!—But there are the Falconers, we all know them at least—now look at the Miss Falconers."

"Alas! we have not the honour of knowing even the Miss Falconers," said Mr. Percy, "though they are our cousins."

"Is it possible that you don't know the Miss Falconers?"

"Very possible," replied Mr. Percy: "they live always

in town, and we have never seen them since they were children: except a visit or two which passed between us just after Mrs. Falconer's marriage, we know nothing even of her, though we are all acquainted with the commissioner, who comes from time to time to this part of the country."

"A very clever man is the commissioner in his way," said Lady Jane, "but nothing to his wife. I can assure you, Mrs. Falconer is particularly well worth your cultivating; for unless maternal rivalship should interfere, I know few people in the world who could be more useful to your girls when you *bring them out*. She has a vast deal of address. And for a proof, as I was going to point out to you, there are the Miss Falconers in the first circles—asked everywhere—yet without fortunes, and with no pretensions beyond, or equal to, what your daughters have—not with half Rosamond's wit and information—nothing comparable in point of beauty and accomplishments to Caroline; yet how they have *got on!* See what fashion can do! Come, come, we must court her patronage—leave that to me: I assure you I understand the ways and means."

"I have no doubt of that," said Mr. Percy. "All that your ladyship has said is excellent sense, and incontrovertible as far as—"

"Oh! I knew you would think so: I knew we should understand one another as soon as you had heard *all* I had to say."

"Excellent sense, and incontrovertible, as far as *it* relates to the means, but perhaps we may not agree as to the ends: and if these are different, you know your means, though the best adapted for gaining your objects, may be quite useless or unfit for the attainment of mine."

"At once, then, we can't differ as to our objects, for it is my object to see your daughters happily married: now tell me," said Lady Jane, appealing alternately to Mr. and Mrs. Percy, "honestly tell me, is not this your object—and yours?"

"Honestly, it is," said Mr. and Mrs. Percy.

"That's right—I knew we must agree there."

"But," said Mrs. Percy, "allow me to ask what you mean by happily married?"

"What do I mean? Just what you mean—what every-

body means at the bottom of their hearts: in the first place, married to men who have some fortune."

"What does your ladyship mean by *some* fortune?"

"Why—you have such a strange way of not understanding! We who live in the world must speak as the world speaks—we cannot recur continually to a philosophical dictionary, and if we had recourse to it, we should only be sent from *a* to *z*, and from *z* back again to *a*; see *affluence*, see *competence*, see *luxury*, see *philosophy*, and see at last that you see nothing, and that you knew as much before you opened the book as when you shut it—which indeed is what I find to be the case with most books I read."

Triumphant, from the consciousness of having hitherto had all the wit on her side, Lady Jane looked round, and continued: "Though I don't pretend to draw my maxims from books, yet this much I do know, that in matrimony, let people have ever so much sense, and merit, and love, and all that, they must have bread and butter into the bargain, or it won't do."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Percy: "under that head I suppose you include all the necessaries of life."

"And some of the luxuries, if you please; for in these days luxuries are become necessaries."

"A barouche and four, for instance?" said Mrs. Percy.

"Oh! no, no—my dear madam, I speak within bounds; you cannot expect a barouche and four for girls who have nothing."

"I expect it as little as I wish it for them," said Mrs. Percy, smiling; "and as little as my daughters, I believe, desire it."

"But if such a thing should offer, I presume you w
not wish that Rosamond or Caroline should refuse.

"That depends upon *who* offers it," Mrs. Percy. "
whatever my wishes might be, I should, as I believe
safely may, leave my daughters entirely at liberty to judge and decide for themselves."

"Yes, I believe you safely may," said Lady Jane, "as long as you keep them here. You might as well talk of leaving them at liberty in the deserts of Arabia. You don't expect that knights and squires should come hither in quest of your damsels?"

"Then you would have the damsels sally forth in quest of the knights and squires?" said Mr. Percy.

"Let them sally forth at any rate," said Lady Jane, laughing; "nobody has a right to ask in quest of what. We are not now in the times of ancient romance, when young ladies were to sit straight-laced at their looms, or never to stir farther than to their bower-windows."

"Young ladies must now go a great deal farther," said Mr. Percy, "before the discourteous knights will deign to take any notice of them."

"Ay, indeed it is shameful!" said Lady Jane, sighing. "I declare it is shameful!" repeated she, indignantly. "Do you know that last winter at Bath the ladies were forced to ask the gentlemen to dance?"

"Forced!" said Mr. Percy.

"Yes, forced!" said Lady Jane, "or else they must have sat still all night, like so many simpletons."

"Sad alternative!" said Mr. Percy; "and, what is worse, I understand that partners for life are scarcely to be had on easier terms; at least so I am informed by one of your excellent modern mothers, Mrs. Chatterton, who has been leading her three *gawky* graces about from one watering-place to another these six years, fishing, and hunting, and hawking for husbands. 'There, now! I have carried my girls to Bath, and to London, and to Tunbridge, and to Weymouth, and to Cheltenham, and everywhere; I am sure I can do no more for them.' I assure you," continued Mr. Percy, "I have heard Mrs. Chatterton say these very words in a room full of company."

"In a room full of company! Shocking!" said Lady Jane. "But then poor Mrs. Chatterton is a fool, you know; and, what is worse, not *well-mannered*—how should she? But I flatter myself, if you will trust me with your daughter Caroline, we should manage matters rather better. Now let me tell you my plan. My plan is to take Caroline with me immediately to Tunbridge, previous to her London campaign. Nothing can be a greater mistake than to keep a young lady *up*, and prevent her being seen till the moment when she is to be brought out: it is of incalculable advantage that, previous to her appearance in the great world, she should have been seen by certain fashionable *prôneurs*. It is essential that certain reports respecting her accomplishments and connexions should have had time to circulate properly."

All this Mr. and Mrs. Percy acknowledged, in as unqualified a manner as Lady Jane could desire, was fit and necessary to secure what is called a young lady's success in the fashionable world; but they said that it was not their object to *dispose of their daughters*, as it is called, *to the best advantage*. The arts which are commonly practised for this purpose they thought not only indelicate, but ultimately impolitic and absurd; for men in general are now so well aware of them that they avoid the snares, and ridicule and detest those by whom they are contrived. If, now and then, a dupe be found, still the chance is that the match so made turns out unhappily; at best, attachments formed in public places, and in the hurry of a town life, can seldom be founded on any real knowledge of character, or suitableness of taste and temper. "It is much more probable," added Mrs. Percy, "that happy marriages should be made where people have leisure and opportunities of becoming really and intimately acquainted with each other's dispositions."

"Vastly well!" said Lady Jane: "so you mean to bury your daughters in the country—to shut them up, at least—all the days of their unfortunate lives!"

Mr. and Mrs. Percy, both at the same moment, eagerly declared that they had no such absurd or cruel intention towards their daughters. "On the contrary," said Mr. Percy, "we shall take every proper occasion that our present fortune and situation will allow, of letting them see agreeable and sensible persons."

"Are they to spring out of the ground, these agreeable and sensible persons?" said Lady Jane. "Whom do you see in this desert, or expect to see?"

"We see your ladyship, in the first place," said Mr. Percy: "you cannot, therefore, wonder if we are proud enough to expect to see sometimes good company, persons of merit, and even of fashion, though we have lost our station and fortune."

"That is very politely turned by you, Mr. Percy. Much more polite than my desert. But I could not bear the thoughts of your sweet pretty Caroline's blushing unseen."

"Nor could we," said Mr. Percy, "bear the thoughts of her ceasing to blush from being too much seen. We could not bear the thoughts of *fitting our daughters out*, and sending them to the London market, with the por-

tionless class of matrimonial adventurers, of whom even the few that succeed are often doomed but to splendid misery in marriage; and the numbers who fail in their venture are, after a certain time, consigned to neglect and contempt in single wretchedness. Here, on the contrary, in the bosom of their own families, without seeking to entice or entrap, they can at all events never be disappointed or degraded; and, whether married or single, will be respected and respectable, in youth and age—secure of friends, and of a happy home."

"Happy nonsense! begging your pardon, my dear coz. Shall I tell you what the end of all this living in the bosom of their own families will be?—that they will die old maids. For mercy's sake, my dear Mrs. Percy, do not let Mr. Percy be philosophical for your daughters, whatever he may be for himself. You, I am sure, cannot wish your poor daughters to be *old maids*," said her ladyship, with a tremendous accent upon the word.

"No, I should wish them to marry, if I could ensure for them good husbands, not merely good fortunes. The warmest wish of my heart," cried Mrs. Percy, "is to see my daughters as happy as I am myself, married to men of their own choice, whom they can entirely esteem, and fondly love. But I would rather see my daughters in their graves than see them throw themselves away upon men unworthy of them, or sell themselves to husbands unsuited to them, merely for the sake of being *established*, for the vulgar notion of *getting married*, or to avoid the imaginary and unjust ridicule of being old maids."

The warmth and energy with which these last words were spoken, by so gentle a person as Mrs. Percy, surprised Lady Jane so much that she was silent; all her ideas being suddenly at a stand, and her sagacity at fault. Mr. Percy proposed a walk to show her the Hills; as her ladyship rose to accompany him, she said to herself, "Who could have guessed that Mrs. Percy was so romantic?—But she has caught it from her husband. What a strange father and mother!—But, for the sake of the poor girls, I will not give up the point. I will have Caroline with me to Tunbridge, and to town, in spite of their wise heads."

She renewed her attack in the evening, after tea. Rising, and walking towards the window, "A word with you, Mr. Percy, if you please. The young people are

going to walk, and now we can talk the matter over by ourselves."

"Why should not we talk it over before the young people?" said Mr. Percy. "We always speak of every thing openly in this family," continued he, turning to Lady Jane; "and I think that is one reason why we live so happily together. I let my children know all my views for them, all my affairs, and my opinions, I may say all my thoughts, or how could I expect them to trust me with theirs?"

"As to that, children are bound by gratitude to treat their parents with perfect openness," said Lady Jane; "and it is the duty of children, you know, to make their parents their confidants upon all occasions."

"Duty and gratitude are excellent things," said Mr Percy; "but somewhat more is necessary between parent and child to produce friendship. Recollect the Duc d'Epernon's reply to his king, who reproached him with want of affection. 'Sire, you may command my services, my life; but your majesty knows friendship is to be won only by friendship.'"

"Very true," said Lady Jane; "but friendship is not, properly speaking, the connexion that subsists between parents and children."

"I am sorry you think so," said Mr. Percy, smiling: "pray do not teach my children that doctrine."

"Nay," said Lady Jane, "no matter whether we call it friendship or not; I will answer for it, that, without any refined notions about perfect openness and confidence, your children will be fond of you, if you are indulgent to them in certain points. Caroline, my dear," said she, turning to Caroline, who was at the farthest end of the room, "don't look so unconscious, for you are a party concerned; so come and kneel at the feet of this perverse father of yours, to plead your cause and mine. I must take you with me to Tunbridge. You must let me have her a summer and winter, and I will answer for Caroline's success."

"What does your ladyship mean by my success?" said Caroline.

"Why, child—Now don't play your father's philosophic airs upon me! We people who live in the world, and not with philosophers, are not prepared for such entrapping interrogatories. But come, I mean, in plain English, my dear, though I am afraid it will shock your

ears, that you will be" (speaking loud) "pretty well admired, pretty well abused, and—oh, shocking!—pretty well married."

"Pretty well married!" repeated Mrs. Percy, in a scornful tone: "but neither Caroline nor I should be satisfied unless she be very well married."

"Heyday! There is no knowing where to have you *lady* philosophers. This morning you did not desire a coach and four for your daughters—not you; now you quarrel with me on the other side of the question. Really, for a lady of moderation, you are a little exorbitant. *Pretty well married*, you know, implies 2000*l.* a year; and *very well married* [illegible]thing under 10,000*l.*"

"Is that the language of the market? I did not understand the exact meaning of *very well married*—did you, Caroline? I own I expect something more than 10,000*l.* a year."

"More!—you unconscionable wretch! how much more!" said Lady Jane.

"Infinitely more," said Mr. Percy: "I expect a man of sense, temper, and virtue, who would love my daughter as she deserves to be loved."

"Let me advise you," said Lady Jane, in her very gravest tone, "not to puff up Caroline's imagination with a parcel of romantic notions. I never yet knew any good done by it. Depend on it you will be disappointed, if you expect a genius to descend from the clouds express for your daughters. Let them do as other people do, and they may have a chance of meeting with some good sort of men, who will make them as happy as—as happy as their neighbours."

"And how happy is that?" said Caroline: "as happy as we are now?"

"As you are now!" said Lady Jane: "a vastly pretty maidenly speech! But young ladies, nevertheless, usually think that the saffron robe of Hymen would not be the most unbecoming dress in the world; and whether it be in compliance with their daughters' taste, or their own convenience, most parents are in a hurry to purchase it."

"Sometimes at the expense of their daughters' happiness for life," said Mrs. Percy.

"Well, lest we should go over the same ground, and get into the same labyrinth, where we lost ourselves this morning, let me come to the point at once. May I

hope, Mr. and Mrs. Percy, to have the pleasure of Caroline's company at Tunbridge next week, and in town next winter, or not? That is the question."

"That is a question which your ladyship will be so good as to ask Caroline, if you please," said Mr. Percy; "both her mother and I wish that she should decide for herself."

"Indeed!" cried Lady Jane: "then, my dear Caroline, if you please, come with me this minute to my dressing-room, and we'll settle it all at my *toilette de nuit*. I have a notion," added her ladyship, as she drew Caroline's arm within hers, and led her out of the room, "I have a notion that I shall not find you quite so impracticable as your father has shown himself."

"You may leave us, Keppel," said Lady Jane to her maid, as she went into her dressing-room—"I will ring when I want you.—My love," said she to Caroline, who stood beside her dressing-table, "why did not you let Keppel dress your hair to-day?—But no matter—when I once get you to town, we'll manage it all our own way. I have a notion that you are not of a positive temper."

Caroline coloured at this speech.

"I see what you are thinking of," said Lady Jane, mistaking her countenance; "and to tell you the truth, I also am sadly afraid, by what I see, that we shall hardly gain our point. I know your father—some difficulty will be started, and ten to one he will not allow me to have you at last, unless you try and persuade him yourself."

"I never try to persuade my father to do any thing."

"What, then, he is not a man to be persuaded?"

"No," said Caroline, smiling; "but, what is much better, he is a man to be convinced."

"Better!" exclaimed Lady Jane: "why surely you had not rather live with a man you were to convince than one you could persuade?"

"Would it not be safer?" said Caroline: "the arts of persuasion might be turned against us by others, but the power of conviction never could."

"Now, my dear, you are too deep for me," replied Lady Jane. "You said very little in our long debate this morning, and I'm afraid I said too much; but I own I could not help speaking candidly. Between our-

selves, your father has some notions, which, you know, are a little odd."

"My father!" exclaimed Caroline.

"Yes, my dear, though he is your father, and my relation too, you know one cannot be quite blinded by partiality—and I never would give up my judgment."

"Nor would I," said Caroline. "Nor I am sure would my father ever desire it. You see how freely he permits, he encourages us all to converse with him. He is never displeased with any of us for being of a different opinion from his."

"He may not show displeasure," said Lady Jane.

"Oh! he does not feel it, ma'am—I assure you," said Caroline, with emotion. "You do not know my father, indeed you do not."

"My dear," said Lady Jane, retracting, "I know he is an excellent father, and I am sure I would have you think so—it is your duty; but, at the same time, you know he is not infallible, and you must not insist," added she, sharply, "upon all the world being of one way of thinking. My dear, you are his favourite, and it is no wonder you defend him."

"Indeed, ma'am," said Caroline, "if I am his favourite, I do not know it."

"My dear, don't mistake me. It is no wonder that you *are*. You must be a favourite with everybody; and yet," said Lady Jane, and she paused, "as you hinted, perhaps I am mistaken: I think Rosamond seems—hey?—Now tell me candidly—*which is* the favourite?"

"I would if I knew," said Caroline.

"Oh! but there must be some favourite in a family—I know there must; and since you will not speak, I guess how it is. Perhaps, if I had asked your sister Rosamond to go to town with me next winter, your father would have been better pleased, and would have consented more readily."

"To lose her company if she were his favourite!" said Caroline, smiling.

"But you know, my dear," continued Lady Jane, without hearing or attending to this, "you know, my dear, that Rosamond, though a very good girl and very sensible, I am sure, yet she has not your personal advantages, and I could do nothing for her in town, except, perhaps, introduce her at Mrs. Cator's, and Lady Spils-

bury's, or Lady Angelica Headingham's conversazione —Rosamond has a mixture of naïveté and sprightliness that is new and might *take*. If she had more courage, and would hazard more in conversation, if she had, in short, *l'art de se faire valoir*, one could hand her verses about, and get her forward in the bel-esprit line. But she must stay till we have brought you into fashion, my dear, and another winter, perhaps—well, my love, I will not keep you up longer. On Monday, if you please, we shall go—since you say you are sure your father is in earnest, in giving you leave to decide for yourself."

What was Lady Jane Granville's astonishment, when she heard Caroline decline, with polite thanks, her kind invitation!

Her ladyship stood silent with suspended indignation.

"This cannot be your own determination, child?"

"I beg your ladyship's pardon—it is entirely my own. When a person is convinced by good reasons, those reasons surely become their own. But independently of all the arguments which I have heard from my father and mother, my own feelings must prevent me from leaving home in our present circumstances. I cannot quit my parents and my sister, now they are, comparatively speaking, in distress. Neither in prosperity nor adversity do I wish to leave my family, but certainly not in adversity."

"High-flown notions! Your family is not in any great distress, that I see: there is a change, to be sure, in the style of life; but a daughter more, you know, only increases the—the difficulties."

"I believe my father and mother do not think so," said Caroline; "and till they do, I wish to stay with them, and share their fortune, whatever it may be."

"I have done—as you please—you are to decide for yourself, Miss Caroline Percy: this is your final determination?"

"It is," said Caroline; "but permit me," added she, taking Lady Jane's hand, and endeavouring by the kindest tone of gratitude to avert the displeasure which she saw gathering, "permit me to assure you, that I am truly grateful for your kindness, and I hope—I am sure, that I never shall forget it."

Lady Jane drew away her hand haughtily. "Permit me to assure you, Miss Caroline Percy, that there are few, very few young ladies indeed, even among my own

nearest relations, to whom I would have undertaken to be *chaperon*. I do not know another young lady in England to whom I would have made the offer I have made to you, nor would that offer ever have been made could I reasonably have foreseen the possibility of its being refused. Let us say no more, ma'am, if you please—we understand one another now—and I wish you a good night."

Caroline retired, sorry to have displeased one who had shown so much friendly eagerness to serve her, yet not in the least disposed to change her determination. The next day Lady Jane's morning face boded no good. Mr. and Mrs. Percy in vain endeavoured by all the kind attentions in their power to assuage her feelings, but nothing restored her to that sweet temper in which she had begun the chapter of advice. She soon announced that she had received letters which called her immediately to Tunbridge, and her ladyship quitted the Hills, resolving never more to visit relations who would not be guided by her opinion.

The next persons who came to visit the Percy family in their retirement were Mrs. Hungerford and her daughter Mrs. Mortimer, who had been friends and near neighbours while they resided at Percy-hall, and whose society they had particularly regretted. The distance at which they now lived from Hungerford Castle was such, that they had little hope that any intercourse could be kept up with its inhabitants, especially as Mrs. Hungerford had arrived at that time of life when she was exempted from the ceremony of visiting, and she seldom stirred from home except when she went to town annually to see her daughter Mortimer.

"So," said Mrs. Hungerford, as Mr. Percy helped her out of her carriage, "my good friend, you are surprised at seeing me, are you?—Ah! you thought I was too old or too lazy to come; but I am happy to be able to convince you that you are mistaken. See what motive will do! You know Mr. Percy says, that people can do any thing they please, and it is certain that it pleased me to do this."

When she was seated, and Mrs. Percy spoke of the distance from which she had kindly come to see them, she answered, "I hear people talk of a *visiting distance*; and I understand perfectly well what it means when acquaintance are in question, but for friends there is no

visiting distance. Remove to the Land's End, and, old as I am, I will pursue and overtake you too, tortoise as I seem; and don't depend upon dark nights, for every night is full moon to me when I am bent upon a visit to a friend; and don't depend upon hills—there are no Pyrenees between us."

These sound, perhaps, like mere civil speeches, but they came from one who always spoke sincerely, and who was no common person. Mrs. Hungerford was, by those who did not know her, thought proud; those who did knew that she had reason to be proud. She was of noble descent, dignified appearance, polite manners, strong understanding, and high character. Her fortune, connexions, various knowledge, and extraordinary merit had, during a long life, given her means of becoming acquainted with most of the persons of any celebrity or worth in her own or in foreign countries. No new candidate for fame appeared in any line of life, without desiring to be noticed by Mrs. Hungerford; no traveller of distinction or of literature visited England without providing himself with letters of introduction to Mrs. Hungerford, and to her accomplished daughter, the wife of Admiral Mortimer. In her early youth she had passed some years abroad, and had the vivacity, ease, polish, *tact*, and *esprit de société* of a Frenchwoman, with the solidity of understanding, amiable qualities, domestic tastes, and virtues of an Englishwoman. The mutual affection of this mother and daughter not only secured their own happiness, but diffused an additional charm over their manners, and increased the interest which they otherwise inspired. Mrs. Mortimer's house in London was the resort of the best company, in the best sense of the word: it was not that dull, dismal, unnatural thing, an English *conversazione*, where people are set, against their will and their nature, to talk wit: or reduced, against their pride and their conscience, to worship *idols*. This society partook of the nature of the best English and the best French society, judiciously combined: the French mixture of persons of talents and of rank, men of literature and of the world; the French habit of mingling feminine and masculine subjects of conversation, instead of separating the sexes, far as the confines of their prison-room will allow, into hostile parties, dooming one sex to politics, argument, and eternal sense, the other to scandal, dress, and eternal nonsense.

Yet with these French manners, there were English morals; with this French ease, gayety, and politeness, English sincerity, confidence, and safety: no *simagrée*, no *espionage*; no intrigue, political or gallant; none of that profligacy which not only disgraced, but destroyed the *reality* of pleasure in Parisian society, at its most brilliant era. The persons of whom Mrs. Mortimer's society was formed were, in their habits and good sense, so thoroughly English, that, even had it been possible for them to put morality and religion out of the question, they would still have thought it quite as convenient and agreeable to love their own husbands and wives as to play at cross-purposes in gallanting their neighbours'. Of consequence, Mrs. Mortimer, in the bloom of youth and height of fashion, instead of being a coquette, "hunting after men with her eyes," was beloved, almost to adoration, as a daughter, a wife, a mother, a friend. Mrs. Hungerford, at an advanced age, was not a wretched, selfish Madame du Deffand, exacting *hommage* and *attentions*, yet believing in the existence of friendship; complaining in the midst of all the luxuries of life, mental and corporeal, of being oppressed by ennui, unable to find any one to love and esteem, or incapable of loving and esteeming any one; Mrs. Hungerford, surrounded "with all that should accompany old age,"

"As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,"

was, as she often declared, with gratitude to Providence, happier in age than she had been even in youth. With warm affections, and benevolence guided and governed in its objects by reason and religion; indulgent to human nature in general, and loving it, but not with German cosmopolitism—first and best, loving her daughter, her family, comprising a wide and happy extent of relations and connexions, sons and nephews in the army and navy, or in different employments in the state: many of these young men already distinguished, others wanting only opportunity to do equal honour to their name.

During the summer Mrs. Mortimer usually spent some months at Hungerford Castle, and generally took with her from town some friends whose company she thought would peculiarly suit her mother's taste. Mrs. Hunger-

ford had always been in the habit of inviting the Percy family, whenever she had anybody with her whom she thought they would wish to see or hear; and thus the young people, though living retired in the country, had enjoyed the advantages of becoming early acquainted with many celebrated literary and public characters, and of living in the best society: these were advantages which they obtained from their education and their merit; for assuredly Mrs. Hungerford would never have troubled herself with them merely because they were her neighbours, possessing so many thousand pounds a year, and representatives of the Percy interest in the county. A proof of which, if any were wanting, is, that she never took the least notice of those who now held their place at Percy-hall; and the first visit she paid when she came to the country, the first visit she had been known to pay for years, was to her friends the Percys, after they had lost their thousands per annum. So completely was it themselves and not their fortune which she had always considered, that she never condoled with them, and scarcely seemed to advert to any change in their circumstances. She perceived, to be sure, that she was not at Percy-hall; she discovered, probably, that she was in a small instead of a large room; the change of prospect from the windows struck her eye, and she remarked that this part of the country was more beautiful than that to which she had been accustomed. As to the more or less of show, of dress, or equipage, these things did not merely make no difference in Mrs. Hungerford's estimation of persons, but in fact scarcely made any impression upon her senses or attention. She had been so much accustomed to magnificence upon a large scale, that the different subordinate degrees were lost upon her; and she had seen so many changes of fashion and of fortune, that she attached little importance to these. Regardless of the drapery of objects, she saw at once what was substantial and essential. It might, she thought, be one man's taste to visit her in a barouche and four, with half a dozen servants, and another person's pleasure to come without parade or attendants—this was indifferent to her. It was their conversation, their characters, their merit, she looked to; and many a lord and lady of showy dress and equipage, and vast importance in their own opinions, shrank into insignificance in the company of Mrs. Hungerford;

and, though in the room with her, passed before her eyes without making a sufficient sensation upon her organs to attract her notice, or to change the course of her thoughts.

All these *peculiarities* in this lady's character rendered her particularly agreeable to the Percy family in their present circumstances. She pressed them to pay her a long visit.

"You see," said Mrs. Hungerford, "that I had the grace to forbear asking this favour till I had possession of my daughter Mortimer, and could bring her with me to entice you. And, my dear young friends, you shall find young friends too, as well as old ones, at my house: my nieces, the Lady Pembrokes, are to be with me; and Lady Angelica Headingham, who will entertain you, though, perhaps, you will sometimes be tired *for* her, she works so hard *aux galères de bel-esprit*. I acknowledge she has a little too much affectation. But we must have charity for affectation and its multitude of foibles; for, you know, Locke says that it is only a mistaken desire to please. Angelica will find out her mistakes in time, and after trying all manners, will hold fast by the best—that is, the most natural: in the mean time, do you, my dear young friends, come and admire her as an inimitable actress. Then, Mr. Percy, I have for you three temptations—a man of letters, a man of science, and a man of sense. And, for the climax of my eloquence, I have reserved," continued she, turning to Mrs. Percy, "my appeal to the mother's *feelings*. Know, then, that my son, my eldest hope, my colonel, has arrived from the Continent—landed last night—I expect him home in a few days, and you must come and flatter me that he is prodigiously improved by the service he has seen, and the wounds which he can show, and assure me that, next to your own Godfrey, you would name my Gustavus, of all the officers in the army, as most deserving to be our commander-in-chief."

An invitation which there were so many good and kind reasons for accepting could not be refused. But before we go to Hungerford Castle, and before we see Colonel Hungerford—upon whom, doubtless, many a one at this instant, as well as Rosamond Percy, has formed designs or prognostics in favour of Caroline—we must read the following letter, and bring up the affairs of Alfred and Erasmus.

CHAPTER XV.

LETTER FROM ALFRED PERCY TO HIS MOTHER.

"My dear Mother,

"I am shocked by your story of Kate Robinson. I agree with you in rejoicing that Caroline had sufficient penetration to see the faults of Buckhurst Falconer's character, and steadiness enough, notwithstanding his agreeable talents, never to give him any encouragement. I agree with you, also, that it was fortunate that her last letter to him was written and sent before this affair came to her knowledge. It was much better that she should abide by her objection to his general principles than to have had explanations and discussions on a subject into which she could not enter with propriety.

"I will, as you desire, keep Buckhurst's secret. Indeed, in a worldly point of view, it behooves him that it should be carefully kept, because Bishop Clay, the prelate, who gave him his present living, though he tolerates gormandizing to excess, is extremely strict with his clergy *in other matters;* and, as I once heard Buckhurst say,

> 'Compounds for sins he is inclin'd to,
> By damning those he has no mind to.'

Buckhurst had, I believe, hopes that Caroline would have relented, in consequence of his last overture; he was thrown into despair by her answer, containing, as he told me, such a calm and civil repetition of her refusal—that he swears he will never trouble her again. For a fortnight after, he protests he was ready to hang himself. About that time, I suppose, when he heard of Kate Robinson's death, he shut himself up in his rooms for several days—said he was not well, and could not see anybody. When he came out again, he looked wretchedly ill, and unhappy: I pitied him—I felt the truth of what Rosamond said, 'that there is such a mixture of good and bad in his character, as makes me change my opinion of him every half-hour.'

"He has just done me an essential service. He

learned the other day from one of his sisters the secret reason why Lord Oldborough was displeased with Godfrey, and why Godfrey was despatched to the West Indies. Lord Oldborough had been told, either by Cunningham, or by one of his sisters, that Godfrey made love to Miss Hauton, and that when he came to town ostensibly on some regimental business, and was pleading for a brother officer, his concealed motive was to break off the marriage of his lordship's niece. Buckhurst had been at the opera in the same box with Miss Hauton and with my brother Godfrey one night. Godfrey's conduct had been misrepresented, and as soon as Buckhurst found that Lord Oldborough had been deceived, he was determined that he should know the truth; or, at least, that he should know that my brother was not to blame. Godfrey never mentioned the subject to me; but, from what I can understand, the lady showed him *distinguished attention*. How Buckhurst Falconer managed to *right* my brother in Lord Oldborough's opinion without *involving* the young lady *I do* not know. He said that he had fortunately had an opportunity one evening at his father's, when he was playing at chess with Lord Oldborough, of speaking to him on that subject, when none of his family was watching him. He told me that Lord Oldborough desires to see me, and has appointed his hour to-morrow morning. Now, Rosamond, my dear, set your imagination to work; I must go and draw a *replication*, which will keep mine fast bound.

"Yours truly,
"ALFRED PERCY."

At the appointed hour, Alfred waited upon the minister, and was received graciously. Not one word of Godfrey, however, or of any thing leading to that subject. Lord Oldborough spoke to Alfred as to the son of his old friend. He began by lamenting the misfortunes which had deprived Mr. Percy of that estate and station to which he had done honour. His lordship went on to say that he was sorry that Mr. Percy's love of retirement, or pride of independence, precluded all idea of seeing him in parliament; but he hoped that Mr. Percy's sons were in this extravagant notion of independence, and in this *only*, unlike their father.

With all due deference, Alfred took the liberty of

replying to the word *extravagant*, and endeavoured to explain that his father's ideas of independence did not go beyond just bounds; Lord Oldborough, contrary to his usual custom when he met with any thing like contradiction, did not look displeased; on the contrary, he complimented Alfred on his being a good advocate. Alfred was going *to fall into commonplace*, about a good cause; but from that he was happily saved by Lord Oldborough's changing the conversation.

He took up a pamphlet which lay upon his table. It was Cunningham Falconer's, that is to say, the pamphlet which was published in Cunningham's name, and for which he was mean enough to take the credit from the poor starving genius in the garret. Lord Oldborough turned over the leaves. "Here is a passage that was quoted yesterday at dinner at Commissioner Falconer's, but I don't think that any of the company, or the commissioner himself, though he is, or was, a reading man, could recollect to what author it alludes."

Lord Oldborough pointed to the passage: "*Thus the fane of heroes is at last neglected by their worshippers, and left to the care of the birds of heaven, or abandoned to the serpents of the earth.*"

Alfred fortunately recollected that this alluded to a description in Arrian of the island of Achilles, the present isle of Serpents, where there is that temple of the hero of which, as the historian says, "the care is left to the birds alone, who every morning repair to the sea, wet their wings, and sprinkle the temple, afterward sweeping with their plumage its sacred pavement."

Lord Oldborough smiled, and said, "The author—the reputed author of this pamphlet, sir, is obliged to you for throwing light upon a passage which he could not himself elucidate."

This speech of Lord Oldborough's alluded to something that had passed at a dinner at Lord Skreene's, the day before Cunningham had set out on his embassy. Cunningham had been *posed* by this passage, for which Secretary Cope, who hated him, had maliciously complimented him, and besought him to explain it. Secretary Cope, who was a poet, made an epigram on Cunningham the diplomatist. The lines we do not remember. The points of it were, that Cunningham was so complete a diplomatist, that he would not commit himself by giving up his authority, even for a quotation, and

that when he knew the author of an excellent thing, he, with admirable good faith, *kept it to himself*. This epigram remained at the time a profound secret to Lord Oldborough. While Cunningham was going with a prosperous gale it was not heard of; but it worked round, according to the manœuvres of courts, just by the time the tide of favour began to ebb. Lord Oldborough, dissatisfied with one of Cunningham's despatches, was heard to say, as he folded it up, "*A slovenly performance!*"

Then, at the happy moment, stepped in the rival secretary Cope, and put into his lordship's hands the epigram and the anecdote.

All this the reader is to take as a note explanatory upon Lord Oldborough's last speech to Alfred, and now to go on with the conversation—at the word *elucidate*.

"I suspect," continued his lordship, "that Mr. Alfred Percy knows more of this pamphlet altogether than the reputed author ever did."

Alfred felt himself change colour, and the genius in the garret rushed upon his mind; and at the same instant he recollected that he was not at liberty to name Mr. Temple, and that he must not betray Cunningham. Alfred answered that it was not surprising he should know the pamphlet well, as he probably admired it more, and had read it oftener, than the author himself had ever done.

"Very well parried, young gentleman. You will not allow, then, that you had any hand in writing it?"

"No, my lord," said Alfred, "I had none whatever; I never saw it till it was published."

"I have not a right, in politeness, to press the question. Permit me, however, to say, that it is a performance of which any man might be proud."

"I should, my lord, be proud, very proud, if I had written it; but I am incapable of assuming a merit that is not mine, and I trust the manner in which I now disclaim it does not appear like the affected modesty of an author who wishes to have that believed which he denies. I hope I convince your lordship of the truth."

"I cannot have any doubt of what you assert in this serious manner, sir. May I ask if you can tell me the name of the real author?"

"Excuse me, my lord, I cannot. I have answered

your lordship with perfect openness, as far as I am concerned."

"Sir," said Lord Oldborough, "I confess that I began this conversation with the prepossession that you were equal to a performance of which I think highly, but you have succeeded in convincing me that I was mistaken—that you are not equal—but superior to it."

Upon this compliment, Alfred, as he thought the force of politeness could no farther go, rose, bowed, and prepared to retire.

"Are you in a hurry to leave me, Mr. Percy?"

"Quite the contrary, but I was afraid of encroaching upon your lordship's goodness; I know that your time is most valuable, and that your lordship has so much business of importance."

"Perhaps Mr. Alfred Percy may assist me in saving time hereafter."

Alfred sat down again, as his lordship's eye desired it. Lord Oldborough remained for a few moments silent, leaning upon his arm on the table, deep in thought.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I certainly have, as you say, much business upon my hands. But *that* is not the difficulty; with hands and heads business is easily arranged and expedited. I have hands and heads enough at my command. Talents of all sorts can be obtained for their price, but that which is above all price, integrity, cannot—there's the difficulty—there is my difficulty. I have not a single man about me whom I can trust—many who understand my views, but none who feel them—'*Des ames de boue et de fange!*' Wretches who care not if the throne and the country perish, if their little interests—Young gentleman," said he, recollecting himself, and turning to Alfred, "I feel as if I were speaking to a part of your father when I am speaking to you."

Alfred felt this, and Lord Oldborough saw that he felt it strongly.

"*Then*, my dear sir," said he, "you understand me—I see we understand and shall suit one another. I am in want of a secretary to supply the place of Mr. Cunningham Falconer. Mr. Drakelow is going to Constantinople; but he shall first initiate his successor in the business of his office—a routine which little minds

would make great minds believe is a mystery above ordinary comprehension. But, sir, I have no doubt that you will be expert in a very short time in the technical part—in the routine of office; and if it suits your views, in one word, I should be happy to have you for my private secretary. Take time to consider, if you do not wish to give an answer immediately; but I beg that you will consult no one but yourself—not even your father. And as soon as your mind is made up, let me know your decision."

After returning thanks to the minister, who had, by this time, risen to a prodigious height in Alfred's opinion,—after having reiterated his thanks with a warmth which was not displeasing, he retired. The account of his feelings on this occasion is given with much *truth* in his own letter, from which we extract the passage:—

"I believe I felt a little like Gil Blas after his first visit at court. Vapours of ambition certainly mounted into my head, and made me a little giddy; that night I did not sleep quite so well as usual. The bar and the court, Lord Oldborough and my special pleader, were continually before my eyes balaneing in my imagination all the *pros* and *cons*. I fatigued myself, but could neither rest nor decide. Seven years of famine at the bar—horrible! but then independence and liberty of conscience—and, in time, success—the certain reward of industry—well-earned wealth—perhaps honours—why not the highest professional honours? The life of a party-man and a politician, agreed by all who have tried, even by this very Lord Oldborough himself, agreed to be an unhappy life—obliged to live with people I despise—might be tempted, like others, to do things for which I should despise myself—subject to caprice—at best, my fortune quite dependent on my patron's continuance in power—power and favour uncertain.

"It was long before I got my pros and cons even into this rude preparation for comparison, and longer still before the logical process of giving to each good and evil its just value, and drawing clear deductions from distinct premises, could be accomplished. However, in four-and-twenty hours I solved the problem.

"I waited upon Lord Oldborough to tell him my conclusion. With professions of gratitude, respect, and attachment, more sincere, I fancy, than those he usually hears, I began; and ended by telling him in the best

manner I could, that I thought my trade was more honest than his, and that, hard as a lawyer's life was, I preferred it to a politician's.—You don't suspect me of saying all this—no, I was not quite so brutal; but, perhaps, it was implied by my declining the honour of the secretaryship, and preferring to abide by my profession. Lord Oldborough looked—or my vanity fancied that he looked—disappointed. After a pause of silent displeasure, he said, 'Well, sir, upon the whole I believe you have decided wisely. I am sorry that you cannot serve me, and that I cannot serve you in the manner which I had proposed. Yours is a profession in which ministerial support can be of little use, but in which talents, perseverance, and integrity are secure, sooner or later, of success. I have, therefore, only to wish you opportunity: and if any means in my power should occur of accelerating that opportunity, you may depend upon it, sir,' said his lordship, holding out his hand to me, 'I shall not forget you—even if you were not the son of my old friend, you have made an interest for yourself in my mind.'

"Thus satisfactorily we parted—no—just as I reached the door, his lordship added, 'Your brother, Captain Percy—have you heard from him lately?'

"'Yes, my lord, from Plymouth, where they were driven back by contrary winds.'

"'Ha! he was well, I hope?'

"'Very well, I thank your lordship.'

"'That's well—he is a temperate man, I think. So he will stand the climate of the West Indies—and, probably, it will not be necessary for his majesty's service that he should remain there long.'

"I bowed—was again retiring—and was again recalled.

"'There was a major in your brother's regiment about whom Captain Percy spoke to me—Major—'

"'Gascoigne, I believe, my lord.'

"'Gascoigne—true—Gascoigne.' His lordship wrote the name down in a note-book.

"Bows for the last time—not a word more on either side.

"And now that I have written all this to you, my dear mother, I am almost ashamed to send it—because it is so full of egotism. But Rosamond, the *excuser-general*,

him to his pencil, in proof of which the artist showed many masterpieces that wanted only the finishing touch, in particular a huge, long-limbed, fantastic, allegorical piece of his own design, which he assured Dr Percy was the finest example of the *beau idéal*, ancient or modern, that human genius had ever produced upon canvass. "And what do you think, doctor," said the painter, "tell me what you can think of a connoisseur, a patron, sir, who could stop my hand, and force me from that immortal work to a portrait? A portrait! Barbarian! He fit to encourage genius! He set up to be a Mecænas! Mere vanity! Gives pensions to four sign-post daubers, not fit to grind my colours! Knows no more of the art than that fellow," pointing to the Irishman, who was at that instant grinding the colours —*as* he described himself.

"And lets me languish here in obscurity!" continued the enraged painter. "Now I'll never put another stroke to his Dutch beauty's portrait, if I starve—if I rot for it in jail! He a Mecænas!"

The changes upon this abuse were rung repeatedly by this irritated genius, his voice and palsied hand trembling with rage while he spoke, till he was interrupted by a carriage stopping at the door.

"Here's the patron!" cried the Irishman, with an arch look. "Ay, it's the patron, sure enough!"

Dr Percy was going away, but O'Brien got between him and the door, menacing his coat with his pallet knife covered with oil—Erasmus stopped.

"I ax your pardon, but don't go," whispered he: "I wouldn't for the best coat nor waistcoat ever I seen you went this minute, dear!"

Mr Gresham was announced—a gentleman of a most respectable, benevolent, prepossessing appearance, whom Erasmus had some recollection of having seen before. Mr. Gresham recognised him instantly he was the merchant whom Erasmus had met at Sir Amyas Courtney's the morning when he offended Sir Amyas about the made shell. After having spoken a few words to the painter about the portrait, Mr. Gresham turned to Dr. Percy, and said, "I am afraid, sir, that you lost a friend at court by your sincerity about a shell."

Before Erasmus could answer—in less time than he could have thought it possible to take off a stocking, a

great bare leg—O'Brien's leg, came between Mr. Gresham and Dr. Percy.

"There's what lost him a rich friend anyway, and gained him a poor one, if that would do any good. There it is now! This leg! God for ever bless him and reward him for it!"

Then with eloquence, emphasis, and action, which came from the heart, and went to the heart, the poor fellow told how his leg had been saved, and spoke of what Dr. Percy had done for him, in terms which Erasmus would have been ashamed to hear, but that he really was so much affected with O'Brien's gratitude, and thought it did so much honour to human nature, that he could not stop him. Mr. Gresham was touched also; and upon observing this, Erasmus's friend, with his odd mixture of comedy and pathos, ended with this exhortation, "And God bless you, sir! you're a great man, and have many to my knowledge under a compliment to you; and if you've any friends that are *lying*, or sick, if you'd recommend them to send for *him* in preference to any other of the doctors, it would be a charity to themselves and to me; for I will never have peace else, thinking how I have been a hinderance to him. And a charity it would be to themselves, for what does the sick want but to be cured? and there's the man will do that for them, as two witnesses here present can prove—that jantleman, if he would spake, and myself."

Erasmus now peremptorily stopped this scene, for he began to feel for himself, and to be ashamed of the ridicule which his puffing friend, in his zeal, was throwing upon him. Erasmus said that he had done nothing for O'Brien except placing him in St. George's hospital, where he had been admirably well attended. Mr. Gresham, however, at once relieved his wounded delicacy, and dispelled all fears and anxiety, by the manner in which he spoke and looked. He concluded by inviting Dr. Percy to his house, expressing with much cordiality a wish to be more intimately acquainted with a young gentleman, of whose character he had accidentally learned more good than his modesty seemed willing to allow should be known.

O'Brien's eyes sparkled; he rubbed his hands, but restrained himself, lest Dr. Percy should be displeased. When Erasmus went away, O'Brien followed him down

stairs, begging his honour's pardon—if he had said any thing wrong or unbecoming, it was through ignorance.

It was impossible to be angry with him.

We extract from Erasmus's letter to his mother the following account of his first visit to Mr. Gresham.

"When I went to see Mr. Gresham, I was directed to an unfashionable part of the town, to one of the dark old streets of the city; and from all appearance I thought I was going to grope my way into some strange dismal den, like many of the ancient houses in that quarter of the town. But, to my surprise, after passing through a court, and up an unpromising staircase, I found myself in a spacious apartment. The darkness changed to light, the smoke and din of the city to retirement and fresh air. A near view of the Thames appeared through large windows down to the floor, balconies filled with flowers and sweet shrubs! It was an Arabian scene in London. Rosamond, how you would have been delighted! But I have not yet told you that there was a young and beautiful lady sitting near the balcony, and her name is Constance: that is all I shall tell you about the young lady at present. I must go on with Mr. Gresham, who was in his picture gallery—yes, picture gallery—and a very fine one it is. Mr. Gresham, whose fortune is one of those of which only English merchants can form any adequate idea, makes use of it in a manner which does honour to his profession and to his country: he has patronised the arts with a munificence not unworthy of the Medici.

"My complaining genius, the painter, who had abused his patron so much, was there with his portrait, which, notwithstanding his vow never to touch it again, he had finished and brought home, and with it the sprawling Venus: he was now extremely angry with Mr. Gresham for declining to purchase this chef-d'œuvre. With the painter was a poet equally vain and dissatisfied.

"I admired the mildness with which Mr. Gresham bore with their ill-humour and vanity.—After the painter and poet, to my satisfaction, had departed, I said something expressive of my pity for patrons who had to deal with the irritable race. He mildly replied, that he thought that a man surrounded as he was with all the comforts and luxuries of life should have compassion, and should make allowance for genius struggling with poverty, dis-

ease, and disappointment. He acknowledged that he had met with much ingratitude, and had been plagued by the pretensions, expectations, and quarrels of his tribe of poets and painters. 'For a man's own happiness,' said he, 'the trade of a patron is the most dreadful he can follow—gathering samphire were nothing to it.'

"Pray tell my father this, because it opens a new view, and new confirmation of his opinions—I never spent a more agreeable day than this with Mr. Gresham. He converses well, and has a variety of information, which he pours forth liberally, and yet without the slightest ostentation: his only wish seems to be to entertain and inform those to whom he speaks; he has no desire to shine. In a few hours we went over a world of literature. I was proud to follow him, and he seemed pleased that I could sometimes anticipate: I happened to know as well as he did the history of the two Flamels, and several particulars of the Jesuits in Paraguay.

"My father often told us, when we were boys, that there is no knowledge, however distant it seems from our profession, that may not, some time or other, be useful; and Mr. Gresham, after he had conversed sufficiently with me, both on literature and science, to discover that I was not an ignorant pretender, grew warm in his desire to serve me. But he had the politeness to refrain from saying any thing directly about medicine; he expressed only an increased desire to cultivate my acquaintance, and begged that I would call upon him at any hour, and *give him the pleasure of my conversation, whenever I had time.*

"The next morning he called upon me, and told me that he was desired to ask my advice for a sick partner of his, to whom, if I would accompany him, he would immediately introduce me. Who and what this partner is, and of what disease he is dying, if you have any curiosity to know, you shall hear in my next: this frank will hold no more—except love, light as air, to all at home.

"Dear mother, affectionately yours,

"E. Percy."

CHAPTER XVI.

Now for the visit to Hungerford Castle—a fine old place in a beautiful park, which excelled many parks of greater extent by the uncommon size of its venerable oaks. In the castle, which was sufficiently spacious to accommodate with ease and perfect comfort the *troops of friends* which its owner's beneficent character drew round her, there were apartments that usually bore the name of some of those persons who were considered as the most intimate friends of the family. The Percys were of this number. They found their own rooms ready, the old servants of the house rejoicing to see them again, and eager in offering their services. Many things showed that they had been thought of and expected, yet there was nothing that could remind them that any change had taken place in their fortune, no formal or peculiar civilities from the mistress of the house, from her daughter, or nieces: neither more nor less attention than usual, but by every thing that marked old habits of intimacy and confidence, the Percys were, as if undesignedly and necessarily, distinguished from other guests.

Of these the most conspicuous was the Lady Angelica Headingham. Her ladyship had lately come to a large estate, and had consequently produced a great sensation in the fashionable world. During the early part of her life she had been much and injudiciously restrained. The moment the pressure was taken off, the spirit boiled with surprising rapidity. Immediately Lady Angelica Headingham shone forth a beauty, a bel-esprit, and a patroness; and though she appeared as it were *impromptu* in these characters, yet, to do her justice, she supported them with as much spirit, truth, and confidence as if she had been in the habit of playing them all her life, and as if she had trod the fashionable stage from her teens. There was only one point in which, perhaps, she erred: from not having been early accustomed to flattery, she did not receive it with quite sufficient *nonchalance*. The adoration paid to her in her

triple capacity by crowds of worshippers only increased the avidity of her taste for incense, to receive which she would now and then stoop lower than became a goddess. She had not yet been suspected of a real partiality for any of her admirers, though she was accused of giving each just as much encouragement as was necessary to turn his head. Of these admirers two, the most eager and earnest in the pursuit, had followed her ladyship to the country, and were now at Hungerford Castle—Sir James Harcourt and Mr. Barclay.

Sir James Harcourt was remarkably handsome and fashionable—completely a man of the world, and a courtier: who, after having ruined his fortune by standing for government two contested county elections, had dangled year after year at court, living upon the hope and promise of a pension or a place, till his creditors warning him that they could wait no longer, he had fallen in love with Lady Angelica Headingham. Her ladyship's other admirer, Mr. Barclay, was a man of considerable fortune, of good family, and of excellent sense and character. He had arrived at that time of life when he wished to settle to the quiet enjoyment of domestic happiness; but he had seen so much misery arise from unfortunate marriages among some of his particular friends, that he had been afraid of forming any attachment, or, at least, engagement. His acquaintance with fashionable life had still further rendered him averse from matrimony; and from love he had defended himself with infinite caution, and escaped, till in an unlucky moment he had met with Lady Angelica. Against his better judgment, he had been captivated by her charms and talents: his reason, however, still struggled with his passion—he had never actually declared his love; but the lady knew it probably better than he did, and her caprice and coquetry cost him many an agonizing hour. All which he bore with the silence and patience of a martyr.

When the Percy family saw Lady Angelica for the first time, she was in all her glory—fresh from a successful toilet, conscious of renovated powers, with an accumulated spirit of animation, and inspired by the ambition to charm a new audience. Though past the bloom of youth, she was a handsome showy woman, with the air of one who requires and receives admira-

tion. Her attitudes, her action, and the varied expression she threw into her countenance were more than the occasion required, and rather too evidently designed to interest or to fascinate. She was surrounded by a group of gentlemen; Sir James Harcourt, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Seebright, a young poet; Mr. Grey, a man of science; and others—*personnages muets*. Arduous as was the task, Lady Angelica's various powers and indefatigable exertion proved capable of keeping each of these different minds in full play, and in high admiration.

Beauties are always curious about beauties, and wits about wits. Lady Angelica had heard that one of the Misses Percy was uncommonly handsome. Quick as eye could glance, her ladyship passed by Mrs. Percy and Rosamond as they entered the room, fixed upon Caroline, and was satisfied. There was beauty enough to alarm, but simplicity sufficient to remove all fears of rivalship. Caroline entered, without any prepared grace or practised smile, but merely as if she was coming into a room. Her two friends, the Ladies Pembroke, instantly placed her between them, her countenance expressing just what she felt, affectionate pleasure at seeing them.

"A sweet pretty creature, really!" whispered Lady Angelica, to her admirer in waiting, Sir James Harcourt.

"Ye—ye—yes; but nothing *marquante*," replied Sir James.

Mr. Barclay's eye followed, and fixed upon Caroline with a degree of interest. The room was so large, and they were at such a distance from Caroline, who was now occupied in listening to her friends, that Lady Angelica could continue her observations without fear of being overheard.

"There is something so interesting in that air of simplicity!" pursued her ladyship, addressing herself to Mr. Barclay. "Don't you think there is a wonderful charm in simplicity? 'Tis a pity it can't last: it is like those delicate colours which always catch the taste the moment they are seen, by which I've been taken in a hundred times, and have now forsworn for ever—treacherous colours that fade, and fly even while you look at them."

"That is a pity," said Mr. Barclay, withdrawing his eyes from Caroline.

"A thousand pities," said Lady Angelica. "Perhaps, in the country, this delicate charm might possibly, and with infinite care and caution, last a few years, but in town it would not last a season."

"True—too true," said Mr. Barclay.

"For which reason," pursued Lady Angelica, "give me something a little more durable, something that can stand what it must meet with in the world: fashion, for instance, though not half so charming till we are used to it; or knowledge, though often dear-bought; or genius, though doubly taxed with censure; or wit, though so hard to be had genuine—any thing is better than a faded charm, a has-been-pretty simplicity."

"When it comes to *that*, it is lamentable indeed," said Mr. Barclay. He seemed to wish to say something more in favour of simplicity, but to be overpowered by wit.

Sir James shrugged his shoulders, and protested that simplicity had something too *fade* in it to suit his taste.

All this time where was Colonel Hungerford? He had been expected to arrive this day; but a letter came to tell his mother that he was detained by indispensable military business, and that he feared he could not for some weeks have the pleasure of being at home. Every one looked and felt disappointed.

"So," thought Rosamond, "we shall be gone before he comes, and he will not see Caroline!"

"So!" said Lady Angelica, to herself, "he will not see me."

Rosamond was somewhat comforted for her disappointment, by observing that Caroline was not quite lost upon Mr. Barclay, pre-occupied though he was with his brilliant mistress. She thought he seemed to notice the marked difference there was in their manner of passing the day.

Lady Angelica, though she would sometimes handle a pencil, touch the harp, or take up a book, yet never was really employed. Caroline was continually occupied. In the morning, she usually sat with Rosamond and the two Lady Pembrokes, in a little room called *the oriel*, which opened into the great library. Here, in happy retirement, Caroline and Rosamond looked over Mrs. Hungerford's select library, and delighted to read the passages which had been marked with approbation. At other times, without disturbing the rest of the com-

pany, or being disturbed by them, Caroline enjoyed the opportunity of cultivating her talents for music and painting, with the assistance of her two friends, who eminently excelled in these accomplishments.

All this time Lady Angelica spent in talking to show her wit, or lounging to show her grace. Now and then her ladyship condescended to join the young people, when they went out to walk, but never unless they were attended by gentlemen. The beauties of nature have come into fashion of late, and Lady Angelica Heading-ham could talk of bold outlines, and sublime mountains, the charming effects of light and shade, fine *accidents*, and rich foliage, spring verdure and autumnal tints,—while Caroline could enjoy all these things, without expecting to be admired for admiring them. Mrs. Mortimer was planting a new shrubbery, and laying out a ride through the park. Caroline took an unaffected interest in all her plans, while Lady Angelica was interested only in showing how much she remembered of Price, and Repton, and Knight. She became too hot or too cold, or she was tired to death, the moment she ceased to be the principal object of attention. But though her ladyship was thus idle by day, she sometimes worked hard by night—hard as Butler is said to have toiled in secret, to support the character of an idle universal genius, who knows every thing without studying any thing. From dictionaries and extracts, abridgments and *beauties* of various authors, here, and there, and everywhere, she picked up shining scraps, and often by an ostentation of superficial knowledge succeeded in appearing in conversation to possess a vast extent of literature, and to be deeply skilled in matters of science, of which she knew nothing, and for which she had no taste.

Mr. Seebright, the poet, was easily duped by this display: he expressed the most flattering astonishment, and pronounced her ladyship to be a universal genius. He looked up to Lady Angelica for patronage. He was so weak, or so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that the patronage of a fashionable literary lady of high rank would immediately guide the opinion of the public, and bring a poet forward to fortune and fame. With these hopes he performed his daily, hourly duty of admiration to his fair patroness, with all possible zeal and assiduity; but it was observed by Rosamond that, in con-

versation, whenever Mr. Seebright had a new idea or a favourite allusion to produce, his eye involuntarily turned first to Caroline; and though he professed, on all points of taste and criticism, to be implicitly governed by Lady Angelica Headingham, there was "a small still voice" to which he more anxiously listened.

As to Mr. Grey, the man of science—he soon detected Lady Angelica's ignorance; smiled in silence at her blunders, and despised her for her *arts of pretence*. In vain, to win his suffrage, she produced the letters of various men of note and talents with whom she was in correspondence; in vain she talked of all the persons of rank who were her relations or dear friends: she should be so happy to introduce him to this great man, or to mention him to that great lady; she should be so proud, on her return to town, to have Mr. Grey at her *esprit parties;* she would have such and such celebrated characters to meet him, and would have the pleasure and honour of introducing him to every person worth knowing in town.

With all due civility Mr. Grey declined these offers. There were few persons the pleasure or honour of whose company could compensate to him for the loss of his time, or equal the enjoyment he had in his own occupations; and those few he was so happy to have for his friends, he did not wish to form new acquaintance—he never went to *conversaziones*—he was much obliged to her ladyship, but he did not want to be *mentioned* to great men or great women. The nature of his fame was quite independent of fashion. In this respect men of science have much the advantage of men of taste. Works of taste may, to a certain degree, be *cried up* or *cried down* by fashion. The full fledged bard soars superior, and looks down at once upon the great and little world; but the young poet, in his first attempts to rise, is often obliged, or thinks himself obliged, to have his wing impelled by patronage.

With all her resources, however, both of patronage and of *bel-esprit*, Lady Angelica was equally surprised and mortified to find herself foiled at her own arms, by a girl whom nobody knew. She changed her manœuvres—she thought she could show Miss Caroline Percy, that, whatever might be her abilities, her knowledge, or her charms, these must all submit to the superior power of fashion. Caroline, having lived in the country, could

not know much of the world of fashion. This was a world from which she thought she could move every other at pleasure. Her conversation was no longer of books, of which all of equal talents were competent to form a judgment, but her task was now of persons, with whom no one who had not lived in the great world could pretend to be acquainted, of whom they could not presume to judge. Her ladyship tried in vain to draw Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer to her aid; they were too well bred to encourage this exclusive and unprofitable conversation. But her ladyship knew that she could be sufficiently supported by Sir James Harcourt. He [illegible] upon knowing and being known to everyone, that is [illegible] in London, he had an inexhaustible fund of town and court anecdote. What an auxiliary for Lady Angelica! But though their combined operations were carried on with consummate skill, and though the league offensive was strictly kept with every demonstration of mutual amity that could excite jealousy or express contempt for rival powers; yet the ultimate purpose was not gained—Caroline was not mortified, and Mr. Barclay was not jealous; at least, he was not sufficiently jealous to afford a clear triumph.

One morning, when she had been playing off all her graces, while Sir James admired her in every Proteus form of affectation, Mr. Barclay, as she thought, evidently pained by her coquetry, retired from the sofa where she sat, and went to Mrs. Hungerford's table, where he took up a book and began to read. Lady Angelica spared no art to distract his attention: she contrived for herself an employment, which called forth continual exclamations of admiration, joy, despair, which at first made Mr. Barclay turn to see by what they could be caused; but when he found that they were occasioned only by the rise or fall of a house of cards which she was building, he internally said "Pshaw!" and afterward kept his eyes fixed upon his book. Sir James continued to serve the fair architect with the frail materials for her building—her *Folly*, as she called it—and for his services he received much encouragement of smiles, and many marked commendations. Mrs. Hungerford called upon Mr. Barclay to read a favourite poem.

Mr. Barclay read remarkably well, and soon fixed the attention of all the company except that of Lady

Angelica and her knight, Sir James Harcourt, whom she detained in her service. She could not be so flagrantly rude as to interrupt the reader by audible exclamations, but by dumb-show, by a variety of gestures and pretty looks of delight at every fresh story added to her card edifice, and at every motion of terror lest her tower should fall, her ladyship showed Mr. Barclay that she was not listening to that which she knew he was particularly desirous that she should hear.

The moment the reader's voice ceased, Lady Angelica approached the table. "Ten millions of pardons!" said she, drawing some cards from beneath Miss Caroline Percy's elbow, which rested on them. "Unpardonable wretch that I am, to have disturbed such a revery —and such an attitude! Mr. Barclay," continued her ladyship, "now if you have leisure to think of me, may I trouble you for some of your little cards for the attic of my dear Folly?

Mr. Barclay coolly presented the cards to her ladyship: then looked out of the window, observed that his horse was at the door, and was following Mr. Percy out of the room, when Lady Angelica, just as Mr. Barclay passed, blew down her tower, and exclaimed, "There's an end of my Folly—of one of my follies, I mean: I wish I could blow them all away so easily."

The sigh and look of penitence with which she pronounced these words were accepted as expiation—Mr. Barclay stopped and returned; while sweeping the wreck of her tower from the table, she repeated,

> "Easy, as when ashore an infant stands,
> And draws imagined houses on the sands,
> The sportive wanton, pleased with some new play,
> Sweeps the slight works and fancied domes away:
> Thus vanish at thy touch the tow'rs and walls,
> The toil of *mornings* in a moment falls."

"Beautiful lines!" said Mr Barclay.

"And charmingly repeated," said Sir James Harcourt: "are they your ladyship's own?"

"No; Homer's," said she, smiling; "Pope's Homer's, I mean."

To cover his blunder as fast as possible, Sir James went on to something else, and asked what her ladyship thought of Flaxman's sketches from the Iliad and Odyssey? He had seen the book lying on the library table yesterday: indeed, his eye had been caught, as it

lay open, by a striking resemblance—he knew it was very rude to talk of likenesses—but, really, the resemblance was striking between a lady he had in his view, and one of the figures in Flaxman, of Venus, or Penelope, he could not say which, but he would look for the book and see in a moment.

The book was not to be found on the library table; Mrs. Hungerford said she believed it was in the oriel: Sir James went to look—Miss Caroline Percy was drawing from it—that was unlucky, for Mr. Barclay followed, staid to admire Miss Percy's drawings, which he had never seen before, and in looking over these sketches of hers from Flaxman's Homer, and from Euripides and Æschylus, which the Lady Pembrokes showed him, and in speaking of them, he discovered so much of Caroline's taste, literature, and feeling, that he could not quit the oriel. Lady Angelica had followed to prevent mischief, and Mrs. Hungerford had followed to enjoy the pleasure of seeing Caroline's modest merit appreciated. While Mr. Barclay admired in silence, Sir James Harcourt, not with his usual politeness, exclaimed, "I protest I had no notion that Miss Caroline Percy drew in this style!"

"That's possible," cried Lady Mary Pembroke, colouring with that prompt indignation which she was prone to feel when any thing was said that seemed derogatory to her friends, "that's possible, Sir James; and yet you find Miss Caroline Percy does draw in this very superior style—yes, and it is the perfection of her accomplishments, that they are never exhibited."

"You have always the pleasure of discovering them," said Mrs. Hungerford; "they are, as a woman's accomplishments and acquirements ought to be, more retiring than obtrusive; or, as my old friend Dr. South quaintly but aptly expresses it—more in intaglio than in cameo."

At this instant a sudden scream was heard from Lady Angelica Headingham, who caught hold of Mr. Barclay's arm, and writhed as if in agony.

"Good heavens! What is the matter?" cried Mr. Barclay.

"Oh! cramp! cramp! horrid cramp! in my foot—in my leg!"

"Rest upon me," said Mr. Barclay, "and stretch your foot out."

"Torture!—I can't." It was impossible that she could stand without the support of both gentlemen.

"Carry me to the sofa—there!"

When they had carried her out of the oriel to the sofa in the library, and when her ladyship found that she had excited sufficient interest, and drawn the attention of Mr. Barclay away from Caroline, her ladyship began to grow a little better, and by graceful degrees recovered the use of her pretty limbs. And now, as she had reason to be satisfied with the degree of feeling which Mr. Barclay had involuntarily shown for her when he thought she was suffering, if her vanity had had any touch of gratitude or affection mixed with it, she would not have taken this moment to torment the heart of the man—the only man who ever really loved her; but all in her was vanity: she began to coquette with Sir James Harcourt—she let him put on her sandal and tie its strings—she sent him for her shawl, for she had a mind to walk in the park—and when Mr. Barclay offered to attend her, and when she found that Caroline and the Lady Pembrokes were going, she had a mind not to go, and she resolved to detain them all in admiration of her. She took her shawl from Sir James, and throwing it round her in graceful drapery, she asked him if he had ever seen any of Lady Hamilton's attitudes, or rather scenic representations with shawl drapery.

Yes, he had; but he should be charmed to see them in perfection from her ladyship.

Notwithstanding the hint Mrs. Hungerford had given about *exhibiting*, and notwithstanding Mr. Barclay's grave looks, Lady Angelica, avowedly to please Sir James Harcourt, consented to give the exhibition of the passions. She ran into the oriel—attired herself in a most appropriate manner, and appeared first in the character of Fear—then of Hope: she acted admirably, but just as

"Hope enchanted, smiled, and waved her golden hair,"

her ladyship's auburn tresses caught on some ornament in the room. The whole fabric was raised a little from the fair head on which it seemed to grow—Caroline sprang forward instantly, and dexterously disentangling the accomplished actress, relieved her from this imminent and awkward peril.

"I am sure I'm exceedingly obliged to Miss Caroline Percy," said her ladyship, adjusting her headdress. "There, now, all's right again—thank you, Miss Percy—don't trouble yourself, pray."

The heartless manner of these thanks, and her ladyship's preparing to go on again with her exhibition, so displeased and disgusted Mr. Barclay, that he left her to the flattery of Sir James Harcourt, and, sighing deeply, quitted the room.

Lady Angelica, proud of showing her power of tormenting a man of his sense, smiled victorious; and, in a half-whisper, said to Mrs. Hungerford, "Exit Mr. Barclay, jealous, because he thinks I did the shawl attitudes for Sir James, and not for him—Poor man! he's very angry; but he'll ride it off—or I'll smile it off."

Mrs. Hungerford shook her head. When her ladyship's exhibition had finished, and when Sir James had continued repeating, either with his words or his looks, "Charming! Is not she charming?" till the time of dressing, an hour to which he was always punctual, he retired to his toilet, and Lady Angelica found herself alone with Mrs. Hungerford.

"Oh! how tired I am!" cried her ladyship, throwing herself on a sofa beside her. "My spirits do so wear me out! I am sure I'm too much for you, Mrs. Hungerford; I am afraid you think me a strange wild creature: but, dear madam, why do you look so grave?"

"My dear Lady Angelica Headingham," said Mrs. Hungerford, in a serious but affectionate tone, laying her hand upon Lady Angelica's as she spoke, "I was, you know, your mother's most intimate friend—I wish to be yours. Considering this and my age, I think I may venture to speak to you with more freedom than any one else now living could with propriety—it grieves me to see such a woman as you are spoiling by adulation."

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Hungerford! and now do tell me all my faults," said Lady Angelica: "only first let me just say, that if you are going to tell me that I am a coquette, and a fool, I know I am—both—and I can't help it: and I know I am what some people call *odd*—but I would not for the world be a common character."

"Then you must not be a coquette," said Mrs. Hun-

gerford, "for that *is* a common character—the hackneyed character of every play, of every novel. And whatever is common is vulgar, you know: airs and affectation are common and paltry—throw them aside, my dear Lady Angelica; disdain flattery, prove that you value your own esteem above vulgar admiration, and then, with such beauty and talents as you possess, you may be, what you admire, an uncommon character."

"*May* be!" repeated Lady Angelica in a voice of vexation. "Well, I know I have a hundred faults; but I never before heard anybody, friend or enemy, deny that I *am* an uncommon character. Now, Mrs. Hungerford, do you know any one of a more uncommon character?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hungerford, smiling, "I know the thing that's most uncommon,

> 'I know a reasonable woman,
> Handsome and witty, yet a friend.'"

"Oh! your friend Miss Caroline Percy, I suppose. Well! though she is so great a favourite of yours, I must say that, to my fancy, she is as little of an uncommon character as any girl I ever saw—uncommon beauty I acknowledge, she has, though not the style of face I like."

"And an uncommonly good understanding, without one grain of envy, affectation, or vanity," said Mrs. Hungerford.

"Vanity!—Stay till you see her tried," said Lady Angelica; "stay till she has gone through one winter's campaign in London; stay till she has as many admirers as—"

"As you have," said Mrs. Hungerford, smiling. "She seems to be in a fair way of soon trying that experiment to your satisfaction."

A considerable pause ensued; during which many conflicting passions appeared in Lady Angelica's countenance.

"After all, Mrs. Hungerford," resumed she, "do you think Mr. Barclay is really attached to me?"

"I think he *was* really attached to you, and strongly: but you have been doing all you can to weaken and destroy his attachment, I fear."

"Fear nothing! I fear nothing," exclaimed Lady Angelica, "now you tell me, dear Mrs. Hungerford, that

you do not doubt the *reality* of his love: all the rest I will answer for—trust to me, I know my game."

Mrs. Hungerford sighed; and replied, "I am old, have stood by and seen this game played and lost so often, and by as able players as Lady Angelica Headingham—take care—remember, I warn you."

Miss Caroline Percy came into the room at this instant—Lady Angelica went to her toilet to repair her charms.

CHAPTER XVII.

While Mrs. Hungerford was wasting her good advice upon Lady Angelica, Sir James Harcourt at his toilet received this day's letters, which he read, as usual, while his hair was dressing. Some of these letters were from creditors, who were impatient to hear when his *advantageous marriage* would be concluded, or when he would obtain that place which had been so long promised. The place at court, as he was this post informed by a *private, very confidential* letter, under a government cover and huge seal, from his intimate friend, my Lord Skreene, ministers had found themselves under the unfortunate necessity of giving away, to secure three votes on a certain cabinet question.

Sir James threw the letter from him, without reading the rest of his dear friend's official apologies: "So, the place at court is out of the question—a wife must be my last resource," thought he, "but how to bring her to the point?"

Sir James knew that though he was now in high favour, he might, at some sudden turn of caprice, be discarded or deserted by his fair one, as had been the fate of so many of his predecessors. The ruling passion, vanity, must be touched, and the obvious means of awakening jealousy were in his power. He determined to pay attentions to Miss Caroline Percy: his experience in the tactics of gallantry supplying the place of knowledge of the human heart, he counterfeited the symptoms of a new passion, and acted "The Inconstant" so well, that Lady Angelica had no doubt of his

being what he appeared. She was not prepared for this turn of fate, well as she thought she knew her game, and at this unlucky moment, just when she wanted to play off Sir James against Mr. Barclay—and in an old castle in the country too, where no substitute was to be had!

Her ladyship was the more vexed, because Mrs. Hungerford must see her distress. Unused to any thing that opposed her wishes, she lost all temper, and every word and look manifested resentment and disdain towards her innocent and generous rival. In this jealousy, as there was no mixture of love to colour and conceal its nature, it could not pass for refinement of sentiment—it bore no resemblance to any thing noble—it must have been detected, even by a less penetrating and less interested observer than Mr. Barclay. His eyes were now completely opened.

In the mean time, Caroline's character, the more it was brought into light, the more its value, goodness, and purity appeared. In the education of a beauty, as of a prince, it is essential early to inspire an utter contempt of flattery, and to give the habit of observing, and consequently the power of judging, of character.

Caroline, on this occasion, when, perhaps, some little temptation might have been felt by some ladies, remembered her own prayer against coquetry—her manner towards Sir James was free from all possibility of reproach or misconstruction: and by simply and steadily adhering to the truth, and going the straight road, she avoided all the difficulties in which she would have been involved, had she deviated but for a moment into any crooked path.

But to return to Lady Angelica Headingham. She was pleased to see Sir James Harcourt disconcerted, and delighted to see him mortified. Her ladyship's disdainful manner towards Caroline was thrown aside,

"And all the cruel language of the eye"

changed at once. Lady Angelica acknowledged that no one could show more magnanimity than Miss Caroline Percy had displayed in her conduct to Sir James Harcourt. This speech was made of course to be repeated, and when Caroline heard it she could not help smiling at the word magnanimity, which sounded to her rather too grand for the occasion.

Sir James Harcourt, finding himself completely foiled in his schemes, and perceiving that the parties were closing and combining in a manner which his knowledge of the world had not taught him to foresee, endeavoured with all possible address and expedition to make his separate peace with Lady Angelica. Her ladyship, however, was proud to show that she had too much sense and spirit to accept again the homage of this recreant knight. He had not time to sue for pardon—his adventure might have ended in a jail; so forthwith he took his departure from Hungerford Castle, undetermined whether he should again haste to court to beg a place, or bend his course to the city, there to barter his fashion against the solid gold of some merchant, rolling in his majesty's coin, who might be silly enough to give his daughter, for a bow, to a courtier *without* a shilling. On one point, however, Sir James was decided—betide him weal, betide him wo—that his next mistress should neither be a wit, nor a beauty, nor yet a patroness.

After the departure of the baronet, the Lady Angelica expected to find her remaining lover at her feet, in transports of joy and gratitude for this haughty dismissal of his rival. No such thing: Mr. Barclay seemed disposed to throw himself at the feet of another, and of the last person in the world at whose feet her ladyship could bear to think of seeing him. Yet if she had even now taken Mrs. Hungerford's friendly warning, she *might* still have saved herself from mortification; but she was hurried on by her evil genius—the spirit of coquetry.

She had promised to pay a visit this summer to an aunt of Mr. Barclay, Lady B——, who lived in Leicestershire. And now, when every thing was arranged for her reception, Lady Angelica changed her mind, and told Mr. Barclay that she could not go, that she had just received letters from town, from several of her fashionable friends, who were setting out for Weymouth, and who insisted upon her meeting them there—and there was a delightful Miss Kew, a protégée of hers, who was gone to Weymouth in the hope and trust that her ladyship would *produce* her and her new novel at the reading parties which Lady Angelica had projected. She declared that she could not possibly disappoint Miss Kew; besides, she had promised to carry Mr. Seebright to Weymouth, to introduce him and his poem to her friends—his sub-

scription and the success of his poem entirely depended upon her going to Weymouth—she could not possibly disappoint *him*.

Mr. Barclay thought more of his own disappointment—and said so: at which her ladyship rejoiced, for she wished to make this a trial of her power; and she desired rather that her reasons should not appear valid, and that her excuses should not be reasonable, on purpose that she might compel Mr. Barclay to submit to her caprice, and carry him off in triumph in her train.

She carelessly repeated that Leicestershire was out of the question at this time, but that Mr. Barclay might attend her if he pleased.

But it did not please him: he did not think that his aunt was properly treated, and he preferred her to all the bel-esprits and fine ladies who were going to Weymouth—her charming self excepted.

She depended too much on the power of that charming self. Mr. Barclay, whose bands she had gradually loosened, now made one resolute effort, asserted and recovered his liberty. He declared that to Weymouth he could not have the honour of attending her: if her ladyship thought the claims and feelings of her protégées of greater consequence than his, if she held herself more bound by the promises she had given to Mr. Seebright, Miss Kew, or any of her bel-esprit friends, than by those with which she had honoured his aunt, he could not presume to dispute her pleasure, or further to press Lady B——'s request; he could only lament—and submit.

Lady Angelica flattered herself that this was only a bravado, or a temporary ebullition of courage, but, to her surprise and dismay, Mr. Barclay continued firm, calm, and civil. His heart now turned to the object on which his understanding had long since told him it should fix. He saw that Miss Caroline Percy was all that could make him happy for life, if he could win her affections; but of the possibility of succeeding he had great doubts. He had, to be sure, some circumstances in his favour: he was of a good family, and had a considerable fortune; in a worldly point of view he was a most advantageous match for Caroline Percy, but he knew that an establishment was not the *first* object, either with her or with her parents; neither could he wish that any motives of interest should operate in his favour. His character,

his principles, were good, and he had reason to believe that Mr. Percy was impressed with a highly favourable opinion of his good sense and general understanding. Caroline talked to him always as if she liked his conversation, and felt esteem for his character; but the very freedom and ease of her manner showed that she had no thoughts of him. He was many years older than Caroline: it did not amount to an absolute disparity, but it was an alarming difference. Mr. Barclay, who estimated himself with perfect impartiality and candour, was sensible that though his temper was good, yet that it was somewhat fastidious, and though his manners were polite, yet they were reserved—they wanted that amenity, gayety, and frankness which might be essential to win and keep a lady's heart. The more his love, the more doubts of his own deserts increased; but at last he determined to try his fate. He caught a glimpse of Caroline one morning as she was drawing in the oriel. Her sister and the two Lady Pembrokes were in the library, and he thought he was secure of finding her alone.

"May I beg the favour of a few minutes,"—he began with a voice of much emotion as he entered the room; but he stopped short at the sight of Lady Angelica.

In spite of all the rouge she wore, her ladyship's change of colour was striking. Her lips trembled and grew pale. Mr. Barclay's eyes fixed upon her for one moment with astonishment, then turning calmly away, he addressed himself to Caroline, his emotion recurring, though he merely spoke to her of a drawing which she was examining, and though he only said, "Is this yours?"

"Yes, Lady Angelica has just given it to me; it is one of her drawings—a view of Weymouth."

"Very beautiful," said Mr. Barclay, coldly—"a view of Weymouth."

"Where I hope to be the day after to-morrow," cried Lady Angelica, speaking in a hurried, piqued, and haughty voice—"I am dying to get to Weymouth. Mr. Barclay, if you have any letters for your friends there, I shall be happy to carry them. Only let them be given to my woman in time," added her ladyship, rising; "and now I must go and say *vivace! presto! prestissimo!* to her preparations. Well, have you any commands?"

"No commands—but my best wishes for your ladyship's health and happiness, whenever and wherever you go."

Lady Angelica sank down upon her seat—made a strong effort to rise again—but was unable. Caroline, without appearing to take any notice of this, turned to Mr. Barclay, and said, "Will you have the goodness now to give me the book which you were so kind as to promise me?"

Mr. Barclay went in search of it. Caroline proceeded with her drawing, gave Lady Angelica time to recover, and left her the hope that her perturbation had not been noticed. Her ladyship, as soon as she could, left the room, repeating that she had some orders to give for her departure. Caroline waited some time in vain for Mr. Barclay and his book. Afterward, as she was going up stairs, she was met by Rosamond, who, with a face full of mystery, whispered, "Caroline, my father wants you this instant in my mother's dressing-room—Mr. Barclay," added she, in a low voice, and nodding her head, "Oh! I see you know what I mean—I knew how it would be—I said so last night. Now go to my father, and you will hear all the particulars."

Caroline heard from her father the confirmation of Rosamond's intelligence, and she received from him and from her mother the kind assurance that they would leave her entirely at liberty to accept or refuse Mr. Barclay, according as her own judgment and feelings might dictate. They said, that though it might be, in point of fortune, a highly advantageous match, and though they saw nothing to which they could object in his character, understanding, and temper, yet they should not attempt to influence her in his favour. They begged her to decide entirely for herself, and to consult only her own happiness.

"All I insist upon, my dear daughter, is, that you should, without any idle or unjust generosity, consider first and solely what is for your own happiness."

"And for Mr. Barclay's," said Caroline.

"And for Mr. Barclay's, as far as you are concerned: but, remember, the question he asks you is, whether you can love him, whether you will marry him, not whether you would advise him to love or marry somebody else. Don't I know all that passes in your mind?"

"Not all, perhaps," said Caroline, "nor can I tell it

you, because it is another person's secret; therefore, I am sure you will not question me further but since you are so kind as to trust to my judgment, trust to it entirely, when I assure you that I will, without any idle or unjust generosity, consider, principally, what is for my own happiness."

"I am satisfied," said Mr. Percy, "no—one thing more without meaning or wishing to penetrate into any other person's affairs, I have a full right to say to my daughter all that may be necessary to assist her in deciding on a point the most material to her happiness. Now, Caroline," continued her father, looking away from her, "observe, I do not endeavour, from my knowledge of your countenance, even to guess whether what I imagine is fact, but I state to you this supposition—suppose you had been told that another lady is attached to Mr. Barclay!"

"I never was told so," interrupted Caroline, "but I have discovered it by accident—No, I have said too much—I do not think *that person* is attached to him, but that she might easily have become attached, if this proposal had been made to her instead of to me, and I think that their two characters are exactly suited to each other—much better suited than mine could be to Mr. Barclay, or his to me—she has wit and imagination, and great vivacity, he has judgment, prudence, and solid sense—in each there is what would compensate for what is wanting in the other, and both together would make a happy union."

"My dear Caroline," said her father, "I must put you upon your guard against the too easy faith of a sincere affectionate heart. I am really surprised that you, who have always shown such good judgment of character, should now be so totally mistaken as to think a woman capable of a real love who is merely acting a part from vanity and coquetry."

"Vanity! coquetry!" repeated Caroline: "nobody upon earth is more free from vanity and coquetry than —Surely you do not imagine I am thinking of Lady Angelica Headingham?—Oh! no, I have no compassion for her: I know that if she suffers from losing Mr. Barclay, it will be only from losing 'the dear delight of giving pain,' and I should be very sorry she ever again enjoyed that delight at Mr. Barclay's expense. I assure you, I am not thinking of Lady Angelica."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Percy were in doubt whether Caroline was thinking of her sister Rosamond or of her friend Lady Mary Pembroke; but without attempting to discover, they only repeated that, whoever the person in question might be, or however amiable or dear to Caroline, she ought not to let this idea interfere with her own happiness, or influence her in giving an answer to Mr. Barclay's proposal, which she ought either to accept or decline, according as her own feelings and judgment should decide. "If you wish to take time to decide, your father and I will make Mr. Barclay clearly understand that he is not to consider this as any encouragement; and as to the rest," added Mrs. Percy, "when you are sure that you mean right, and that you do right, you will not, my dear Caroline, I hope, be deterred from determining upon what is best for your own happiness, merely by the weak fear of what idle foolish people will say about an affair in which they have no concern."

Caroline assured her mother that no such weak fear acted upon her mind; and that in any case where she had the least doubt whether she could like a person as a husband or not, she should certainly ask for time to consider, before she would give an answer; but that, with respect to Mr. Barclay, she had had sufficient opportunities of seeing and judging of him in the character of a lover, while he had been the admirer of Lady Angelica; that she fully appreciated his good qualities, and was grateful for his favourable opinion; but that she felt perfectly certain that she did not and could not love him; and therefore she desired, as soon as possible, to put him out of the pain of suspense, to prevent him from having the mortification of showing himself the admirer of one by whom he must ultimately be refused; and to leave him at liberty to turn his thoughts elsewhere, to some person to whom he was better suited, and who was better suited to him.

Mr. Barclay had made Mrs. Hungerford alone his confidante. As to Lady Angelica Headingham, he thought that her ladyship could not be in any doubt of the state of his affections as far as she was concerned, and that was all she had a right to know. He never had actually declared his passion for her, and his attentions had completely ceased since the determination she had made to break her engagement with his aunt; but Lady Angelica had still imagined that he would not be able to

bring himself to part with her for ever, and she trusted that, even at the moment of getting into her carriage, she might prevail upon him to forget his wrongs, and might at last carry him off. These hopes had been checked, and for a moment overthrown, by Mr. Barclay's appearance this morning in the oriel; the emotion with which she saw him speak to Caroline, and the indifference with which she heard him wish her ladyship health and happiness at Weymouth, or wherever she went, for an instant convinced her of the truth. But obstinate vanity recurred to the hope that he was not yet irreclaimable, and under this persuasion she hurried on the preparations for her departure, impatient for the moment of crisis—of triumph.

The moment of crisis arrived—but not of triumph. Lady Angelica Headingham's landau came to the door. But *trunks packed and corded* gave no pang to her former lover—Mrs. Hungerford did not press her to stay—Mr. Barclay handed her into the carriage—she stooped to conquer, so far as to tell him, that, as she had only Mr. Seebright and her maid, she could give him a seat in her carriage, if he would come to Weymouth, and that she would thence in a fortnight, at farthest, go to his aunt, dear Lady B——, in Leicestershire. But all in vain—she saw it would not do—bade her servant shut the carriage-door—desired Mr. Seebright to draw up the glass, and, with a look of angry contempt towards Mr. Barclay, threw herself back on the seat to conceal the vexation which she could not control, and drove away for ever from irreclaimable lovers and lost friends. We do not envy Mr. Seebright his trip to Weymouth, with his patroness in this humour; but without troubling ourselves further to inquire what became of her, we leave her

"To flaunt, and go down a disregarded thing."

Rosamond seemed to think that if Caroline married Mr. Barclay, the dénouement would be too near, too clear, and commonplace: she said that in this case Caroline would just be married, like anybody else, to a man with a good fortune, good character, good sense, and every thing very good, but nothing extraordinary, and she would be settled at Mr. Barclay's seat in Leicestershire, and she would be Mrs. Barclay, and, perhaps, happy enough, but nothing extraordinary.

This plain view of things, and this positive termination of all hope of romance, did not please Rosamond's imagination. She was relieved, when at last Caroline surprised her with the assurance that there was no probability of Mr. Barclay's succeeding in his suit. "And yet," said Caroline, "if I were compelled at this moment to marry, of all men I have ever yet seen Mr. Barclay is the person to whom I could engage myself with the least reluctance—the person with whom I think I should have the best security for happiness."

Rosamond's face again lengthened. "If that is the case," said she, "though you have no intention of marrying him at present, you will, I suppose, be *reasoned into* marrying him in time."

"No," said Caroline, "for I cannot be reasoned into loving him."

"There's my own dear Caroline," cried Rosamond: "I was horribly afraid that this man of sense would have convinced you that esteem was quite sufficient without love."

"Impossible!" said Caroline. "There must be some very powerful motive that could induce me to quit my family: I can conceive no motive sufficiently powerful, except love."

Rosamond was delighted.

"For what else *could* I marry?" continued Caroline: "I, who am left by the kindest of parents freely to my own choice—could I marry for a house in Leicestershire? or for a barouche and four? on Lady Jane Granville's principles for an *establishment?* or on the *missy* notion of being married, and having a house of my own, and ordering my own dinner? Was this your notion of me?" said Caroline, with a look of such surprise, that Rosamond was obliged to fall immediately to protestations, and appeals to common sense. "How was it possible she could have formed such ideas!"

"Then why were you so much surprised and transported just now, when I told you that no motive but love could induce me to marry?"

"I don't recollect being surprised—I was only delighted. I never suspected that you could marry without love, but I thought that you and I might differ as to the quantity—the degree."

"No common degree of love, and no common love,

would be sufficient to induce me to marry," said Caroline.

"Once, and but once, before in your life, you gave me the idea of your having such an exalted opinion of love,' replied Rosamond.

"But to return to Mr. Barclay," said Caroline. "I have, as I promised my father that I would, consulted in the first place my own heart, and considered my own happiness. He appears to me incapable of that enthusiasm which rises either to the moral or intellectual sublime. I respect his understanding, and esteem his principles; but in conversing with him, I always feel—and in passing my life with him, how much more should I feel!—that there is a want of the higher qualities of the mind. He shows no invention, no genius, no magnanimity—nothing heroic, nothing great, nothing which could waken sympathy, or excite that strong attachment which I think that I am capable of feeling for a superior character—for a character at once good and great."

"And where upon earth are you to find such a man? Who is romantic now?" cried Rosamond. "But I am very glad that you *are* a little romantic; I am glad that you have in you a touch of human absurdity, else how could you be my sister, or how could I love you as I do?"

"I am heartily glad that you love me, but I am not sensible of my present immediate claim to your love by my touch of human absurdity," said Caroline, smiling. "What did I say that was absurd or romantic?"

"My dear, people never think their own romance absurd. Well! granted that you are not romantic, since that is a point which I find I must grant before I can go on,—now, tell me, was Mr. Barclay very sorry when you refused him?" said Rosamond.

"I dare not tell you that there is yet no danger of his breaking his heart," said Caroline.

"So I thought," cried Rosamond, with a look of ineffable contempt. "I thought he was not a man to break his heart for love. With all his sense, I dare say he will go back to his Lady Angelica Headingham. I should not be surprised if he went after her to Weymouth to-morrow."

"I should," said Caroline; "especially as he has just ordered his carriage to take him to his aunt, Lady B——, in Leicestershire."

"Oh! poor man!" said Rosamond, "now I do pity him."

"Because he is going to his aunt?"

"No, Caroline—you are very cruel—because I am sure he is very much touched and disappointed by your refusal. He cannot bear to see you again. Poor! *poor* Mr. Barclay! I have been shamefully ill-natured. I hope I did not prejudice your mind against him—I'll go directly and take leave of him—poor Mr. Barclay!"

Rosamond, however, returned a few minutes afterward, to complain that Mr. Barclay had not made efforts enough to persuade Caroline to listen to him.

"If he had been warmly in love, he would not so easily have given up hope.

'None, without hope, e'er loved the brightest fair;
But Love can hope, where Reason should despair.'

That, I think, is perfectly true," said Rosamond.

Never—begging Rosamond and the poet's pardon—never—except where reason is very weak, or where the brightest fair has some touch of the equivocating fiend. Love, let poets and lovers say what they will to the contrary, can no more subsist without hope than flame can exist without fuel. In all the cases cited to prove the contrary, we suspect that there has been some inaccuracy in the experiment, and that, by mistake, a little, a very little hope has been admitted. The slightest portion, a quantity imperceptible to common observation, is known to be quite sufficient to maintain the passion; but a total exclusion of hope secures its extinction.

Mr. Barclay's departure was much regretted by all at Hungerford Castle, most, perhaps, by the person who expressed that regret the least, Lady Mary Pembroke—who now silently enjoyed the full chorus of praise that was poured forth in honour of the departed. Lady Mary's common mode of enjoying the praise of her friends was not in silence; all she thought and felt usually came to her lips with the ingenuous vivacity of youth and innocence. Caroline had managed so well by not managing at all, that Lady Mary, far from guessing the real cause of Mr. Barclay's sudden departure, repeatedly expressed surprise that her aunt Hungerford did not press him to stay a little longer; and once said she wondered how Mr. Barclay *could* leave Hungerford Castle while Caroline was there; that she had begun to

think he had formed an attachment which would do him more honour than his passion for Lady Angelica Headingham, but that she feared he would have a relapse of that fit of folly, and that it would at last end fatally in marriage.

Mrs. Hungerford smiled at the openness with which her niece told her conjectures, and at the steadiness with which Caroline kept Mr. Barclay's secret, by saying no more than just the thing she ought.

"The power of keeping a secret is very different from the habit of dissimulation. You would convince me of this, if I had doubted it," said Mrs. Hungerford to Caroline. "Now that the affair is settled, my dear, I must insist upon your praising me, as I have praised you, for discretion. I hope I never influenced your decision by word or look, but I will now own to you that I was very anxious that you should decide precisely as you have done. Mr. Barclay is a sensible man, an excellent man, one who will make any amiable woman he marries happy. I am convinced of it, or I should not, as I do, wish to see him married to my niece—yet I never thought him suited to you. Yours is a character without pretension, yet one which, in love and marriage, would not, I believe, be easily satisfied, would require great qualities, a high tone of thought and action, a character superior and lofty as your own."

Mrs. Hungerford paused, and seemed lost in thought. Caroline felt that this lady had seen deeply into her mind. This conviction, beyond all praise, and all demonstrations of fondness, increases affection, confidence, and gratitude, in strong and generous minds. Caroline endeavoured, but could not well express in words what she felt at this instant.

"My dear," said Mrs. Hungerford, "we know that we are speaking plain truth to each other—we need no flowers of speech—I understand you, and you understand me. We are suited to each other—yes, notwithstanding the difference of age, and a thousand other differences, we are suited to each other. This possibility of a friendship between youth and age is one of the rewards Heaven grants to the early and late cultivation of the understanding and of the affections. Late as it is with me in life, I have not, thank God, survived my affections. How can I ever, while I have such children, such friends!" After a pause of a few moments of seemingly pleasurable

reflections, Mrs. Hungerford continued, "I have never considered friendship as but a name—as a mere worldly commerce of interest: I believe in disinterested affection, taking the word *disinterested* in its proper sense; and I have still, believe me, the power of sympathizing with a *young* friend—such a young friend as Caroline Percy. Early as it is with her in life, she has so cultivated her understanding, so regulated her mind, that she cannot consider friendship merely as a companionship in frivolous amusement, or a mixture of gossiping confidences and idle sentiment; therefore, I am proud enough to hope that she can and will be the friend of such an old woman as I am."

"It would be the pride of my life to have—to deserve such a friend," cried Caroline: "I feel all the condescension of this kindness. I know you are much too good to me. I am afraid you think too highly of me. But Mrs. Hungerford's praise does not operate like flattery: though it exalts me in my own opinion, it shall not make me vain; it excites my ambition to be—all she thinks me."

"You *are* all I think you," said Mrs. Hungerford; "and that you may hereafter be something yet nearer than a friend to me is the warmest wish of my heart—But, no, I will not indulge myself in expressing that wish. Such wishes are never wise where we have no power, no right to act—such wishes often counteract their own object—anticipations are always imprudent. But—about my niece, Lady Mary Pembroke. I particularly admire the discretion, still more than the kindness, with which you have acted with respect to her and Mr. Barclay—you have left things to their natural course. You have not by any imprudent zeal or generosity hazarded a word that could hurt the delicacy of either party. You seem to have been fully aware that wherever the affections are concerned, the human mind is most tenacious of what one half of the philosophers in the world will not allow to exist, and the other half cannot define. Influenced as we all are every moment in our preferences and aversions, sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes avowedly, by the most trifling and often the silliest causes, yet the wisest of us start, and back, and think it incumbent on our pride, in love affairs, to resist the slightest interference, or the best advice, from the best friends. What! love upon compulsion! No—Jupiter

is not more tenacious of his thunderbolt than Cupid is of his arrows. Blind as he is, none may presume to direct the hand of that little urchin."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who brought the post-bag, with many letters for Mrs. Hungerford.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The arrival of the post was at this time an anxious moment to Mrs. Hungerford, as she had so many near relations and friends in the army and navy. This day brought letters with news that lighted up her countenance with dignified joy,—one from Captain Hungerford, her second son, ten minutes after an action at sea with the French.

"Dear mother,—English victorious, of course; for particulars, see Gazette. In the cockle-shell I have could do nothing worth mentioning, but am promised a ship soon, and hope for opportunity to show myself worthy to be your son.

"F. Hungerford."

"I hope I am grateful to Providence for such children!" cried Mrs. Hungerford.

Mrs. Mortimer darted upon Captain Hungerford's name in the Gazette—"And I cannot refrain from mentioning to your lordships the gallant manner in which I was seconded by Captain Hungerford."

"Happy mother that I am! And more happiness still—a letter also from my colonel! Thanks of commanding officer—gallant conduct abroad—leave of absence for three weeks—and will be here to-morrow!"

This news spread through the castle in a few minutes, and the whole house was in motion and in joy.

"What is the matter?" said Rosamond, who had been out of the room when the colonel's letter was read. "As I came down stairs, I met I can't tell how many servants running different ways, with faces of delight. I do believe Colonel Hungerford is come"

"Not come, but coming," said Mrs. Hungerford; "and I am proud that you, my friends, should see what a sensation the first sound of his return makes in his own *home*. There it is, after all, that you may best judge what a man really is."

Every thing conspired to give Caroline a favourable idea of Colonel Hungerford. He arrived—and his own appearance and manners, far from contradicting, fully justified all that his friends had said. His appearance was that of a soldier and a gentleman, with a fine person and striking countenance, with the air of command, yet without presumption; not without a consciousness of his own merit, but apparently with only a consciousness sufficient to give value and grace to his deference for others. To those he respected or loved his manner was particularly engaging; and the appropriate attentions he paid to each of his friends proved that their peculiar tastes, their characteristic merits, and their past kindnesses, were ever full in his remembrance. To his mother his grateful affection, and the tender reverence he showed, were quite touching; and the high opinion he had of her character, and the strong influence she held over his mind, he seemed proud to avow in words and actions. To his sister Mortimer, in a different but not less pleasing manner, his affection appeared in a thousand little instances, which the most polite courtier, with the most officious desire to please, could not without the happy inspiration of truth have invented. There were innumerable slight strokes in his conversation with his sister which marked the pleasure he felt in the recollection of their early friendship, allusions to trivial passages in the history of their childhood, which none of the important scenes in which he had since been engaged had effaced from his mind; and at other times a playful carelessness, that showed the lightness, the expanding freedom of heart, which can be felt only in the perfect confidence and intimacy of domestic affection. In his manner towards his cousins, the Lady Pembrokes, who, since he had last seen them, had grown up from children into fine young women, there were nice differences; with all the privileged familiarity of relationship he met the sprightly frankness of Lady Mary, and by a degree of delicate tender respect put the retiring sensitive timidity of Lady Elizabeth at ease. None of these shades of manner were lost upon Caro-

line's discriminating observation. For some time after his arrival, the whole attention of every individual at Hungerford Castle was occupied by Colonel Hungerford. All were alternately talking of him or listening to him. The eagerness which everybody felt to hear from him accounts of public and private affairs, and the multitude and variety of questions by which he was assailed, drew him out continually; so that he talked a great deal, yet evidently more to gratify others than himself. He was always unwilling to engross the conversation, and sometimes anxious to hear from his mother and sister of domestic occurrences; but he postponed his own gratification, and never failed to satisfy general curiosity, even by the repetition of narratives and anecdotes, till he was exhausted. Conscious that he did not wish to make himself the hero of *his* tale, he threw himself upon the mercy of his friends, or their justice; and without any of the provoking reserve of affected or cowardly humility, he talked naturally of the events in which he had taken a share, and of what concerned himself as well as others. With polite kindness, which gratified them peculiarly, he seemed to take the Percy family, as his mother's friends, directly upon trust as his own: he spoke before them, freely, of all his confidential opinions of men and things. He did them justice in considering them as safe auditors, and they enjoyed and fully appreciated the value of his various conversation. In his anecdotes of persons, there was always something decidedly characteristic of the individual, or illustrative of some general principle. In his narratives there were strong marks of the Froissart accuracy of detail, which interests by giving the impression of reality, and the proof of having been an eyewitness of the scene; and sometimes, scorning detail, he displayed the power of keeping an infinite number of particulars in subordination, and of seizing those large features which gave a rapid and masterly view of the whole. For his profession he felt that enthusiasm which commands sympathy. While he spoke of the British army, those who heard him seemed to see every thing, as he did, in a military point of view. Yet his love of military glory had not hardened his heart so as to render him insensible of the evils and sufferings which, alas! it necessarily produces. The natural expression of great feeling and humanity burst from him; but he turned

hastily and firmly from the contemplation of evils which he could not prevent, and would not uselessly deplore. In conversing one day privately with Mr. Percy, he showed that bitter and deep philosophic reflections on the horrors and folly of war had passed through his mind, but that he had systematically and resolutely shut them out.

"We are now," said he, "less likely than ever to see the time when all the princes of Europe will sign the good Abbé St. Pierre's project for a perpetual peace; and in the mean time, while kingdoms can maintain their independence, their existence, only by superiority in war, it is not for the defenders of their country to fix their thoughts upon 'the price of victory.'"

After explaining the plan of a battle, or the intrigues of a court, Colonel Hungerford would turn with delight to plans of cottages, which his sister Mortimer was drawing for him; and from a map of the seat of war he would go to a map of his own estate, eagerly asking his mother where she would recommend that houses should be built, and consulting her about the characters and merits of those tenants with whom his absence on the Continent had prevented him from becoming acquainted. These and a thousand other little traits showed that his military habits had not destroyed his domestic tastes.

Caroline had taken an interest in the military profession ever since her eldest brother had gone into the army. Colonel Hungerford was seven or eight years older than Godfrey Percy, and had a more formed, steady, and exalted character, with more knowledge, and a far more cultivated understanding; but many expressions, and some points of character, were similar. Caroline observed this, and wished and hoped that, when her brother should have had as many opportunities of improvement as Colonel Hungerford's experience had given him, he might be just such a man. This idea increased the interest she took in observing and listening to Colonel Hungerford. After he had been some time at home, and that every day more and more of his amiable character had been developed, Rosamond said to herself, "This is certainly the man for Caroline, and I suspect she begins to think so. If she does not, I never will forgive her."

One day, when the sisters were by themselves, Rosa-

mond tried to sound Caroline on this subject. She began, as she thought, at a safe distance from her main object. "How very much esteemed and beloved Colonel Hungerford is in his own family!"

"Very much and very deservedly," answered Caroline. She spoke without any hesitation or embarrassment.

Rosamond, rather dissatisfied even with the fulness of the assent to her first proposition, added, "And not only by his own family, but by all who know him."

Caroline was silent.

"It is surprising," continued Rosamond, "that a man who has led a soldier's wandering life should have acquired so much literature, such accurate knowledge, and should have retained such simple and domestic tastes."

Full assent again from Caroline, both of look and voice—but still not the exact look and voice Rosamond desired.

"Do you know, Caroline," continued she, "I think that in several things Colonel Hungerford is very like my brother Godfrey?"

"Yes, and in some points, I think Colonel Hungerford is superior to Godfrey," said Caroline.

"Well, I really think so too," cried Rosamond, "and I am sure Godfrey would think and say so himself. How he would admire Colonel Hungerford, and how desirous, how ambitious he would be to make such a man his friend, his—in short, I know if Godfrey was here this minute, he would think just as I do about Colonel Hungerford, and about all other things."

"All other things!" repeated Caroline, smiling; "that includes a good deal."

"Yes, it does, that is certain," said Rosamond, significantly. "And," continued she, "I know another person of excellent judgment too, who, if I mistake not, is of my way of thinking, of wishing at least, in *some things*; that is a comfort. How Mrs. Hungerford does adore her son! And I think she loves you almost as much." Caroline expressed strong gratitude for Mrs. Hungerford's kindness to her, and the warmest return of affection.

"Then, in one word," continued Rosamond, "for out it must come, sooner or later—I think she not only loves you as if you were her daughter, but that—Now con-

fess, Caroline, did not the idea ever occur to you? And don't you see that Mrs. Hungerford wishes *it*? Oh! that blush is answer enough—I'll say no more—I do not mean to torment or distress; good-by, I am satisfied."

"Stay, my dear Rosamond, stay one moment, and I will tell you exactly all I think and feel."

"I will stay as long as you please," said Rosamond, "and I thank you for this confidence."

"You have a right to it," said Caroline: "I see, my dear sister, and feel all your kindness towards me, and all Mrs. Hungerford's; I see what you both wish."

"There's my own sister Caroline, above all artifice and affectation."

"But," said Caroline.

"*But*—Oh! Caroline, don't go back—don't palter with us; abide by your own words and your own character, and don't condescend to any pitiful *buts*."

"You do not yet know the nature of my *but*."

"Nor do I wish to know it, nor will I hear it," cried Rosamond, stopping her ears, "because I know, whatever it is, it will lower you in my opinion. You have fairly acknowledged that Colonel Hungerford possesses every virture, public and private, that can make him worthy of you—not a single fault on which to ground one possible, imaginable, rational *but*. Temper, manners, talents, character, fortune, family, fame—every thing the heart of woman can desire."

"Every thing against which the heart of woman should guard itself," said Caroline.

"Guard!—Why guard? What is it you suspect? What crime can you invent to lay to his charge?"

"I suspect him of nothing. It is no crime—except, perhaps, in your eyes, dear Rosamond," said Caroline, smiling—"no crime not to love me."

"Oh! is that all? Now I understand and forgive you," said Rosamond, "if it is only *that* you fear."

"I do not recollect that I said I *feared* it," said Caroline.

"Well, well, I beg pardon for using that unguarded word—of course your pride must neither hope nor fear upon the occasion; you must quite forget yourself to stone. As you please, or rather as you think proper; but you will allow me to hope and fear for you. Since I have not, thank Heaven! made proud and vain pro-

fessions of stoicism—have not vowed to throw away the rose, lest I should be pricked by the thorn."

"Laugh, but hear me," said Caroline. "I make no professions of stoicism; it is because I am conscious that I am no stoic that I have endeavoured to guard well my heart. I have seen and admired all Colonel Hungerford's good and amiable qualities; I have seen and been grateful for all that you and Mrs. Hungerford hoped and wished for my happiness—have not been insensible to any of the delightful, any of the romantic circumstances of the *vision;* but I saw it was only a vision—and one that might lead me into waking, lasting misery."

"Misery! lasting! How?" said Rosamond.

"Neither your wishes nor Mrs. Hungerford's, you know, can or ought to decide, or even to influence the event, that is to be determined by Colonel Hungerford's own judgment and feelings, and by mine. In the mean time, I cannot forget that the delicacy, honour, pride, prudence of our sex forbid a woman to think of any man as a lover till he gives her reason to believe that he feels love for her."

"Certainly," said Rosamond, "but I take it for granted that Colonel Hungerford does love you."

"But why should we take it for granted?" said Caroline; "he has not shown me any preference."

"Why, I don't know, I am not skilled in these matters," said Rosamond; "I am not sure, but I think—and yet I should be sorry to mislead you—at any rate there is no harm in hoping—"

"If there be no harm, there might be much danger," said Caroline: "better not to think of the subject at all, since we can do no good by thinking of it, and may do harm."

After a pause of surprise, disappointment, and reflection, Rosamond resumed—"So I am to understand it to be your opinion that a woman of sense, delicacy, proper pride, honour, and prudence, must, can, and ought to shut her eyes, ears, understanding, and heart against all the merit and all the powers of pleasing a man may possess, till said man shall and do make a matrimonial proposal for her in due form—hey! Caroline?"

"I never thought any such thing," answered Caroline, "and I expressed myself very ill if I said any such thing.

A woman need not shut her eyes, ears, or understanding to a man's merit—only her heart."

"Then the irresistible charm, the supreme merit, the only merit that can or ought to touch her heart in any man, is the simple or glorious circumstance of his loving her?"

"I never heard that it was a man's supreme merit to love," said Caroline; "but we are not at present inquiring what is a man's, but what is a woman's, characteristic excellence. And I have heard it said to be a woman's supreme merit, and grace, and dignity that her love should *not unsought be won.*"

"That is true," said Rosamond, "perfectly true—in general; but surely you will allow that there may be cases in which it would be difficult to adhere to the letter as well as to the spirit of this excellent rule. Have you never felt—can't you imagine this?"

"I can well imagine it," said Caroline; "fortunately, I have never felt it. If I had not early perceived that Colonel Hungerford was not thinking of me, I might have deceived myself with false hopes: believe me, I never was insensible to his merit."

"But where is the merit or the glory, if there was no struggle, no difficulty?" said Rosamond, in a melancholy tone.

"Glory there is none," said Caroline; "nor do I claim any merit: but is not it something to prevent struggle and difficulty? Is it nothing to preserve my own happiness?"

"Something, to be sure," said Rosamond. "But, on the other hand, you know there is the old proverb, 'Nothing hazard, nothing have.'"

"That is a masculine, not a feminine proverb," said Caroline.

"All I meant to say was, that there is no rule without an exception, as all your philosophers, even the most rigid, allow; and if an exception be ever permitted, surely in such a case as this it might, in favour of such a man as Colonel Hungerford."

"Dangerous exceptions!" said Caroline. "Everybody is too apt to make an exception in such cases in their own favour: that, you know, is the common error of the weak. Oh! my dear sister, instead of weakening, strengthen my mind—instead of trying to raise my

enthusiasm, or reproaching me for want of sensibility, tell me that you approve of my exerting all my power over myself to do that which I think right. Consider what evil I should bring upon myself, if I became attached to a man who is not attached to me; if you saw me sinking, an object of pity and contempt, the victim, the slave of an unhappy passion."

"Oh! my dear, dear Caroline, that could never be—God forbid; oh! God forbid!" cried Rosamond, with a look of terror: but, recovering herself, she added, "This is a vain fear. With your strength of mind, you could never be reduced to such a condition."

"Who can answer for their strength of mind in the second trial, if it fail in the first?" said Caroline. "If a woman once lets her affections go out of her power, how can she afterward answer for her own happiness?"

"All very right, and very true," said Rosamond: "but for a young person, Caroline, I could spare some of this premature reason. If there be some folly, at least there is some generosity, some sensibility often joined with a romantic temper: take care lest you 'mistake reverse of wrong for right,' and, in your great zeal to avoid romance, run into selfishness."

"Selfishness!"

"Why, yes—after all, what are these cold calculations about loving or not loving such a character as Colonel Hungerford—what is all this wonderfully long-sighted care of your own individual happiness but selfishness?—moral, very moral selfishness, I grant."

Caroline coloured, paused, and when she answered she spoke in a lower and graver tone and manner than usual.

"If it be selfish to pursue, by the best means in my power, and by means which cannot hurt any human being, my own happiness, must I deserve to be called selfish?—Unless a woman be quite unconnected with others in society, without a family and without friends—which, I thank God, is not my situation—it is impossible to hazard or to destroy our own happiness by any kind of imprudence without destroying the happiness of others. Therefore imprudence, call it romance, or what you please, is often want of generosity—want of thought for the happiness of our friends, as well as for our own."

"Well come off!" said Rosamond, laughing. "You have proved, with admirable logic, that prudence is the height of generosity. But, my dear Caroline, do not speak so very seriously, and do not look with such 'sweet austere composure.' I don't in earnest accuse you of selfishness—I was wrong to use that ugly word; but I was vexed with you for being more prudent than even good old Mrs. Hungerford."

At these words tears filled Caroline's eyes. "Dear, kind Mrs. Hungerford," she exclaimed, "in the warmth of her heart, in the fulness of her kindness for me, once in her life Mrs. Hungerford said, perhaps, an imprudent word, expressed a wish of which her better judgment may have repented."

"No, no!" cried Rosamond—"her better, her best judgment must have confirmed her opinion of you. She never will repent of that wish. Why should you think she has repented of it, Caroline?"

"Because she must by this time see that there is no probability of that wish being accomplished: she must, therefore, desire that it should be forgotten. And I trust I have acted, and shall always act, as if it were forgotten by me, except as to its kindness—*that* I shall remember while I have life and feeling. But if I had built a romance upon that slight word, consider how much that excellent friend would blame herself when she found that she had misled me, that she had been the cause of anguish to my heart, that she had lowered in the opinion of all, even in her own opinion, one she had once so exalted by her approbation and friendship. And, oh! consider, Rosamond, what a return should I make for that friendship, if I were to be the occasion of any misunderstanding, any disagreement between her and her darling son. If *I* were to become the rival of her beloved niece!"

"Rival!—Niece!—How!—Which?" cried Rosamond; "which?" repeated she, eagerly; "I cannot think of any thing else till you say which."

"Suppose Lady Elizabeth."

"The thought never occurred to me. Is it possible? My dear Caroline, you have opened my eyes; but are you sure? Then you have acted wisely, rightly, Caroline; and I have as usual been very, *very* imprudent. Forgive what I said about selfishness—I was unjust. You selfish! you, who thought of all your friends, I

thought only of you. But tell me, did you think of Lady Elizabeth from the first? Did you see how it would be from the very first?"

"No, I never thought of it till lately, and I am not sure of it yet."

"So you never thought of it till lately, and you are not sure of it yet!—Then I dare say you are mistaken, and wrong, with all your superfluous prudence. I will observe with my own eyes, and trust only my own judgment."

With this laudable resolution Rosamond departed.

The next morning she had an opportunity of observing, and deciding by her own judgment. Lady Elizabeth Pembroke and Caroline had both been copying a picture of Prince Rupert when a boy. They had finished their copies. Mrs. Hungerford showed them to her son. Lady Elizabeth's was rather the superior painting. Colonel Hungerford instantly distinguished it, and, in strong terms, expressed his admiration; but, by some mistake, he fancied that both copies were done by Caroline. She explained to him that that which he preferred was Lady Elizabeth's.

"Yours!" exclaimed Colonel Hungerford, turning to Lady Elizabeth with a look and tone of delighted surprise. Lady Elizabeth coloured, Lady Mary smiled: he forebore adding one word either of praise or observation. Caroline gently relieved Mrs. Hungerford's hand from her copy of the picture which she still held.

Rosamond, breathless, looked, and looked, and waited for something more decisive.

"My mother wished for a copy of this picture," said Lady Elizabeth, in a tremulous voice, and without raising her eyes, "for we have none but a vile daub of him at Pembroke."

"Perhaps my aunt Pembroke would be so good as to accept of the original," said Colonel Hungerford; "and my mother would beg of Lady Elizabeth to give her copy to—our gallery."

"Do, my dear Elizabeth," said Mrs. Hungerford, Lady Elizabeth shook her head, yet smiled.

"Do, my dear, you cannot refuse your cousin?"

"*Cousin!*—there's hope still," thought Rosamond.

"If it were but worthy of his acceptance," said Lady Elizabeth. Colonel Hungerford, lost in the enjoyment

of her self-timidity and retiring grace, quite forgot to say how much he thought the picture worthy of his acceptance.

His mother spoke for him.

"Since Hungerford asks you for it, my dear, you may be certain that he thinks highly of it, for my son never flatters."

"Who? I!—flatter!" cried Colonel Hungerford: "flatter!" added he, in a low voice, with a tenderness of accent and look which could scarcely be misunderstood. Nor was it misunderstood by Lady Elizabeth, as her quick varying colour showed. It was well that at this moment no eye turned upon Rosamond, for all her thoughts and feeling would have been read in her face.

"Come," cried Lady Mary, "let us have the picture in its place directly. Come all of you to the gallery; fix where it shall be hung." Colonel Hungerford seized upon it, and, following Lady Elizabeth, accompanied Lady Mary to the gallery. Mrs. Hungerford rose deliberately—Caroline offered her arm.

"Yes, my dear child, let me lean upon you."

They walked slowly after the young party—Rosamond followed.

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Hungerford, as she leaned more upon Caroline, "I am afraid I shall tire you, my dear."

"Oh! no, no!" said Caroline, "not in the least."

"I am growing so infirm, that I require a stronger arm, a kinder I can never have."

The door of the antechamber, which opened into the gallery, closed after the young people.

"I am not one of those *exigeante* mothers who expect always to have possession of a son's arm," resumed Mrs. Hungerford: "the time I knew would come when I must give up my colonel."

"And with pleasure, I am sure, you now give him up, secure of his happiness," said Caroline.

Mrs. Hungerford stopped short, and looked full on Caroline, upon whom she had previously avoided to turn her eyes. From what anxiety did Caroline's serene, open countenance, and sweet ingenuous smile, at this instant, relieve her friend! Old as she was, Mrs. Hungerford had quick and strong feelings. For a moment she could not speak—she held out her arms to Caroline, and folded her to her heart.

"Excellent creature!" said she—"child of my affections—*that* you must ever be!"

"Oh! Mrs. Hungerford! my dear madam," cried Rosamond, "you have no idea how unjust and imprudent I have been about Caroline."

"My love," said Mrs. Hungerford, smiling, and wiping tears from her eyes, "I fancy I can form a competent idea of your imprudence from my own. We must all learn discretion from this dear girl—you early, I late in life."

"Dear Rosamond, do not reproach yourself for your excessive kindness to me," said Caroline; "in candour and generous feeling who is equal to you?"

"Kissing one another, I protest," cried Lady Mary Pembroke, opening the door from the gallery, "while we were wondering you did not come after us. Aunt Hungerford, you know how we looked for the bow and arrows, and the peaked shoes, with the knee-chains of the time of Edward the Fourth. Well, they are all behind the great armory-press, which Gustavus has been moving to make room for Elizabeth's copy of Prince Rupert. Do come and look at them—but stay; first I have a favour to beg of you, Caroline. I know Gustavus will ask my sister to ride with him this morning, and the flies torment her horse so, and she is such a coward, that she will not be able to listen to a word that is said to her—could you lend her your pretty, gentle White Surrey?"

"With pleasure," said Caroline, "and my net."

"I will go and bring it to your ladyship," said Rosamond.

"My ladyship is in no hurry," cried Lady Mary—"don't run away—don't go; it is not wanted yet."

But Rosamond, glad to escape, ran away, saying, "There is some of the fringe off—I must sew it on."

Rosamond, as she sewed on the fringe, sighed, and worked, and wished it was for Caroline, and said to herself, "So it is all over—and all in vain!"

The horses for the happy riding-party came to the door. Rosamond ran down stairs with the net; Caroline had it put on her horse, and Lady Elizabeth Pembroke thanked her with such a look of kindness, of secure faith in her friend's sympathy, that even Rosamond forgave her for being happy. But Rosamond could not wish to stay to witness her happiness just at this time;

and she was not sorry when her father announced the next day that business required his immediate return home. Lamentations, loud and sincere, were heard from every individual in the castle, especially from Mrs. Hungerford, and from her daughter. They were, however, too well bred to persist in their solicitations to have the visit prolonged.

They said they were grateful for the time which had been given to them, and appeared kindly satisfied with their friends' promise to repeat their visit, whenever they could with convenience.

Caroline, tenderly and gratefully attached to Mrs. Hungerford, found it very difficult and painful to part from her; the more painful because she feared to express all the affection, admiration, and gratitude she felt for this excellent friend, lest her emotion might be misinterpreted. Mrs. Hungerford understood her thoroughly. When she took leave of her, she kissed her at first in silence, and then, by a few strong words, and more by her manner than by her words, expressed her high esteem and affection for her young friend

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CHAPTER XIX.

LETTER FROM DR. PERCY TO HIS SISTER ROSAMOND.

'I NEVER told you, my dear Rosamond, that the beautiful Constance was Mr. Gresham's daughter; I told you only that I saw her at his house. To the best of my belief she is no relation to him. She is daughter to Mr. Gresham's sick partner; and this partner—now, Rosamond, here is coincidence, if not romance, enough to please you—this partner is Mr. Panton, the London correspondent of the shipwrecked Dutch merchants, the very Panton and Co. to whom my father lately wrote to recommend Godfrey's friend, young Captain Henry—captain no more. I have not seen him yet; he is invisible, in the counting-house, in the remote city, in ultimate Broad-street, far as pole from pole from me at *Mrs.* Panton's fine house in Grosvenor-square.

"But now to have done with an old story, before I

begin with a new—I will tell you at once all I know, or probably shall ever know, about Constance. She is sole heiress to her father's fortune, which, on his repeated word, I believe, amounts to hundreds of thousands. She is accomplished and amiable, and, as I told you before, beautiful: but, luckily, her style of beauty, which is that of one of Rubens's wives, does not particularly strike my fancy. Besides, I would really and truly rather have a profession than be an idle gentleman; I love my profession, and feel ambitious to distinguish myself in it, and to make you all proud of your brother, Dr. Percy. These general principles are strengthened beyond the possibility of doubt, by the particular circumstances of *the present case*. A young unknown physician, I have been introduced by a friend to this family, and have, in my medical capacity, been admitted to a degree of familiarity in the house which none shall ever have cause to repent. Physicians, I think, are called upon for scrupulous *good faith*, because, in some respects, they are more trusted in families, and have more opportunities of intimacy, than those of any other profession. I know, my dear Rosamond, you will not suspect me of assuming fine sentiments that are foreign to my real feelings; but I must now inform you, that if I could make myself agreeable and acceptable to Miss Panton, and if it were equally in my will and in my power, yet I should never be, in the language of the market, one shilling the better for her. Her father, a man of low birth, and having, perhaps, in spite of his wealth, suffered from the proud man's contumely, has determined to ennoble his family by means of his only child, and she is not to enjoy his fortune, unless she marry one who has a title. If she unites herself with any man below the rank of a baron's son, he swears she shall never see the colour of a sixpence of his money. I understand that a certain Lord Roadster, eldest son of Lord Runnymede, is the present candidate for her favour—or rather for her wealth; and that his lordship is *patronised* by her father. Every thing that could be done by the vulgar selfishness and moneyed pride of her father and step-mother to spoil this young lady, and to make her consider herself as the first and only object of consequence in this world, has been done—and yet she is not in the least spoiled. Shame to all systems of education! there are some natures so

good, that they will go right where all about them go wrong. My father will not admit this, and will exclaim, Nonsense!—I will try to say something that he will allow to be sense. Miss Panton's own mother was of a good family, and, I am told, was an amiable woman, of agreeable manners, and a cultivated mind, who had been sacrificed for fortune to this rich city husband. Her daughter's first principles and ideas of manners and morals were, I suppose, formed by her precepts and example. After her mother's death, I know she had the advantage of an excellent and enlightened friend in her father's partner, Mr. Gresham, who, having no children of his own, took pleasure, at all his leisure moments, in cultivating little Constance. Then the contrast between her father and him, between their ignorance and his enlightened liberality, must have early struck her mind; and thus, I suppose, by observing their faults and follies, she learned to form for herself an opposite character and manners. The present Mrs. Panton is only her step-mother. Mrs. Panton is a huge, protuberant woman, with a full-blown face, a bay wig, and artificial flowers; talking in an affected little voice when she is in company, and when she has on her *company clothes and manners;* but bawling loud, in a vulgarly broad cockney dialect, when she is at her ease in her own house. She has an inordinate passion for dress, and a *rage* for fine people. I have a chance of becoming a favourite, because I am 'of a good *famimully*,' and Mrs. Panton says she knows very well I have been egg and bird in the best company.

"My patient—observe, my patient is the last person of whom I speak or think—is nervous and hypochondriac; but as I do not believe that you have much taste for medical detail, I shall not trouble you with the particulars of this old gentleman's case, but pray for his recovery—for if I succeed in setting him up again, it will set me up * * * * * For the first timeI have this day, after many calls, seen Godfrey's friend, young Mr. Henry. He is handsome, and, as you ladies say, *interesting*. He is particularly gentlemanlike in his manners; but he looks unhappy, and I thought he was reserved towards me; but I have no right yet to expect that he should be otherwise. He spoke of Godfrey with strong affection.

"Yours, truly,

"Erasmus Percy."

In the care of Mr. Panton's health, Dr. Percy was now the immediate successor to a certain apothecary of the name of Coxeater, who, by right of flattery, had reigned for many years over the family with arbitrary sway, till he offended the lady of the house by agreeing with her husband upon some disputed point about a julap. The apothecary had a terrible loss of old Panton, for he swallowed more drugs in the course of a week than any man in the city swallows in a year. At the same time, he was so economical of these very drugs, that when Dr. Percy ordered the removal from his bed-chamber of a range of half-full phials, he was actually near crying at the thoughts of the waste of such a quantity of good physic: he finished by turning away a footman for laughing at his ridiculous distress. Panton was obstinate by fits, but touch his fears about his health, and he would be as docile as the *bon vivant seigneur in* Zadig, whose physician had no credit with him when he digested well, but who governed him despotically whenever he had an indigestion; so that he was ready to take any thing that could be prescribed, even a basilisk stewed in rose-water. This merchant, retired from business, was now as much engrossed with his health as ever he had been with his wealth.

When Dr. Percy was first called in, he found his patient in a lamentable state, in an arm-chair, dying with the apprehension of having swallowed in a peach a live earwig, which he was persuaded had bred, was breeding, or would breed in his stomach. However *ridiculous* this fancy may appear, it had taken such hold of the man, that he was really wasting away—his appetite failing as well as his spirits. He would not take the least exercise, or stir from his chair, scarcely move or permit himself to be moved, hand, foot, or head, lest he should disturb or waken this nest of earwigs. While these "*reptiles*" slept, he said, he had rest; but when they awoke, he felt them crawling about and pinching his intestines. The wife had laughed, and the apothecary had flattered in vain: Panton angrily persisted in the assertion that he should die—and then they'd "see who was right." Dr. Percy recollected a case, which he had heard from a celebrated physician, of a hypochondriac who fancied that his intestines were sealed up by a piece of wax which he had swallowed, and who, in this belief, refused to eat or drink any thing. Instead

of fighting against the fancy, the judicious physician humoured it—showed the patient sealing-wax dissolving in spirit of wine, and then persuaded him to take some of that spirit to produce the same effect. The patient acceded to the reasoning, took the remedy, said that he felt that his intestines were unsealing—were unsealed: but, alas! they had been sealed so long, that they had lost their natural powers and actions, and he died lamenting that his excellent physician had not been called in soon enough.

Dr. Percy was more fortunate, for he came in time to kill the earwigs for his patient before they had pinched him to death. Erasmus showed Mr. Panton the experiment of killing one of these insects, by placing it within a magic circle of oil, and prevailed upon him to destroy his diminutive enemies with castor oil. When this *hallucination*, to speak in words of learned length, when this hallucination was removed there was still a more difficult task, to cure our hypochondriac of the three remote causes of his disease—idleness of mind—indolence of body—and the habit of drinking every day a bottle of *London particular:* to prevail upon him to diminish the quantity per diem was deemed impossible by his wife; especially as Mr. Coxeater, the apothecary, had flattered him with the notion that *to live high* was necessary for a gouty constitution, and that he was gouty.—N.B. He never had the gout in his life.

Mrs. Panton augured ill of Dr. Percy's success, and Constance grew pale when he touched upon this dangerous subject—the madeira. Yet he had hopes. He recollected the ingenious manner in which Dr. Brown* worked upon a Highland chieftain, to induce him to diminish his diurnal quantity of *spirituous potation.* But there was no family pride to work upon, at least no family arms were to be had. Erasmus found a succedaneum, however, in the love of titles and of what are called *fine people.* Lord Runnymede had given Mr. Panton a gold beaker, of curious workmanship, on which his lordship's arms were engraved; of this present the citizen was very fond and vain: observing this, Dr. Percy was determined to render it subservient to his purposes. He knew they would be right glad of any opportunity of producing and talking of this beaker to all their acquaintance. He therefore advised—no, not *advised,*

* Vide Life of Dr. Brown

for with some minds if you *advise* you are not listened to, if you command you are obeyed—he commanded that his patient should have his madeira always decanted into the curious beaker, for certain galvanic advantages that every knowing porter-drinker is aware of: Erasmus emptied a decanter of madeira into the beaker, to show that it held more than a quart. This last circumstance decided Mr. Panton to give a solemn promise to abide by the advice of his physician, who seized this auspicious moment to act upon the imagination of his patient, by various medical anecdotes. Mr. Panton seemed to be much struck with the account of bottles made of antimonial glass, which continue, for years, to impregnate successive quantities of liquor with the same antimonial virtues. Dr. Percy then produced a piece of coloured crystal about the size of a large nut, which he directed his patient to put into the beaker, and to add another of these medicated crystals every day, till the vessel should be half-full, to increase the power of the drug by successive additions; and by this arrangement Panton was gradually reduced to half his usual quantity of wine.

Dr. Percy's next difficulty was, how to supply the purse-full and purse-proud citizen with motive and occupation. Mr. Panton had an utter aversion and contempt for all science and literature; he could not conceive that any man "could sit down to read for amusement," but he enjoyed a party of pleasure in a good boat on the water, to one of the *aits* or islets in the Thames at the right season, to be regaled with eel-pie. One book he had read, and one play he liked—no, not a play, but a pantomime. The book was Robinson Crusoe—the pantomime, Harlequin Friday. He had been heard to say, that if ever he had a villa, there should be in it an island like Robinson Crusoe's; and why not a fortress, a castle, and a grotto? this would be something new; and why should he not have his fancy, and why should not there be *Panton's Folly* as well as any of the thousand *Follies* in England? Surely he was rich enough to have a Folly. His physician cherished this bright idea. Mrs. Panton was all this time dying to have a villa on the Thames. Dr. Percy proposed that one should be made on Mr. Panton's plan. The villa was bought, and every day the hypochondriac—hypochondriac now no more—went to his villa Crusoe, where he

fussed, and furbished, and toiled at his desert island in the Thames, as hard as ever he laboured to make his *plum* in the counting-house. In *due course* he recovered his health, and, to use his own expression, "became as alert as any man in all England of his inches in the girt, thanks be to Dr. Percy!"

We find the following letter from Dr. Percy, written, as it appears, some months after his first attendance upon Mr. Panton.

"Yes, my dear friends at home, Alfred tells you truth, and does not flatter much. The having set up again this old citizen, who was thought bankrupt in constitution, has done me honour in the city; and, as Alfred assures you, has spread my name through Broad-street, and Fleet-street, and Milk-street, embracing the wide extremes between High-Holborn and St. Mary Axe,

'And even Islington has heard my fame.

In earnest, I am getting fast into practice in the city—and Rosamond must not turn up her aristocratic lip at the city; very *good* men, in every sense of the word, some of the best men I know, inhabit what she is pleased to call the wrong end of the town.

"Mr. Gresham is unceasing and indefatigable in his kindness to me. I consider it as an instance of this kindness that he has found employment for my poor friend O'Brien; has made him his porter—a pleasanter place than he had with the painter, that pleased nobody: O'Brien sees me almost every day, and rejoices in what he calls my prosperity.

"'Heaven for ever prosper your honour' is the beginning and end of all he says, and, I believe, of all he thinks. Is not it singular that my first step towards getting into practice should have been prepared by that which seemed to threaten my ruin—the quarrel with Frumpton about O'Brien and the hospital?

"A delicacy strikes me, and begins at this moment, in the midst of my prosperity, to make my pride uneasy.

"I am afraid that my father should say, Erasmus gets on by patronage, after all—by the patronage of a poor Irish porter and a rich English merchant.

"Adieu, my dear friends; you must not expect such

long letters from me now that I am becoming a busy man. Alfred and I see but little of one another, we live at such a distance, and we are both so gloriously industrious. But we have holyday minutes, when we meet and talk more in the same space of time than any two wise men—I did not say women—that you ever saw.

"Yours, affectionately,

"Erasmus Percy.

"P.S.—I have just recollected that I forgot to answer your question about Mr. Henry. I do see him whenever I have time to go, and whenever he will come to Mr. Gresham's, which is very seldom. Mr. Gresham has begged him repeatedly to come to his house every Sunday, when Henry must undoubtedly be at leisure; yet Mr. Henry has been there but seldom since the first six weeks after he came to London. I cannot yet understand whether this arises from pride, or from some better motive. Mr. Gresham says he likes what he has seen of him, and well observes that a young officer who has lived a gay life in the army must have great power over his own habits, and something uncommon in his character, to be both willing and able thus suddenly and completely to change his mode of life, and to conform to all the restraints and disagreeable circumstances of his new situation."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. PERCY TO ERASMUS PERCY.

"* * * * * * Let me take the opportunity of your playful allusion to your present patrons, a porter and a hypochondriac, seriously to explain to you my principles about patronage—I never had any idea that you ought not to be assisted by friends: friends which have been made for you by your parents I consider as part of your patrimony. I inherited many from my father, for which I respect and bless his name. During the course of my life, I have had the happiness of gaining the regard of some persons of talents and virtue, several of them in high station; this regard will extend to my children while I live, and descend to them when I am no more. I never *cultivated* them with a view to advancing my family, but I make no doubt that their friendship will assist my sons in their progress

through their several professions. I hold it to be just and right that friends should give, and that young men should gratefully accept, all the means and opportunities of bringing professional acquirements and abilities into notice. Afterward the merit of the candidate, and his fitness for any given situation, ought, and probably will, ultimately decide whether the assistance has been properly or improperly given. If family friends procure for any young man a reward of any kind which he has not merited, I should object to that as much as if the place or the reward had been bestowed by a professed patron from political or other interested motives. If my friends were to assist you *merely* because you were my sons, bore my name, or represented the Percy estate, I should not think this just or honourable; but they know the principles which have been instilled into you, and the education you have received: from these they can form a judgment of what you are likely to be, and for what situations you are qualified; therefore it is but reasonable that they should recommend you preferably to strangers, even of equal ability. Every young man has friends, and they will do all they can to assist him: if they do so according to his merits, they do well,—if in spite of his demerits, they do ill; but while nothing is practised to prevent the course of free competition, there can be no evil to the community, and there is no injurious patronage. So much for family friends. Now as to friends of your own making, they are as much your own earning, and all the advantage they can be of to you is as honourably yours, as your fees. Whatever assistance you may receive from Mr. Gresham I consider in this light. As to gratitude—I acknowledge that in some cases gratitude might be guilty of partial patronage.

"If you had saved a minister of state from breaking his neck, and he in return had made you surgeon-general to our armies, without knowing whether you were qualified for that situation, I should call that partial and pernicious patronage; but if you had cured a great man of a dangerous disease, and he afterward exerted himself to recommend you as a physician to his friends and acquaintance, this I should consider as part of your fit reward.

"So, now, my dear son, I hope you fully understand me, and that you will not attribute to me false delica-

cies, and a prudery, a puritanism of independence, which I utterly disclaim.—Go on, and prosper, and depend upon the warm sympathy and entire approbation of your affectionate father,

"L. PERCY."

LETTER FROM ALFRED PERCY TO ROSAMOND.

"MY DEAR ROSAMOND,

"Thank you for your letters from Hungerford Castle. If Mr. Barclay had been but ten years younger, and if he had been ten degrees more a laughing philosopher, and if Caroline could but have loved him, I should have had no objection to him for a brother-in-law; but as my three *ifs* could not be, I regret the Leicestershire estate as little as possible, and I will console myself for not having the marriage settlements to draw.

".Your letters were great delights to me. I kept them to read when the business of the day was done, and I read them by my single candle in my lone chamber. I would rather live in my lone chamber all my days, and never see a wax-light all my nights, than to be married to your Lady Angelica Headingham. I give Mr. Barclay joy of having escaped from her charms. I prefer an indenture tripartite, however musty or tiresome, to a triple tyrant, however fair or entertaining.

"So you expect me to be very entertaining next vacation, and you expect to hear all I have seen, heard, felt, and understood since I came to London. *Alas!* Rosamond, I have no wonders to relate; and lest you should be disappointed when we meet, I had best tell you now and at once all I have to say about myself. My history is much like that of the first years at the bar of every young lawyer—short and bitter—much law and few fees. Some, however, I have received.

"A few of my father's friends, who are so unfortunate as to be at law, have been so good as to direct their attorneys to give me briefs. But most of his friends, to my loss—I am too generous, observe, to say *to my sorrow*—are wise enough to keep clear of lawsuits. I heard his friend, the late chancellor, say the other day to some one who wanted to plunge into a suit in chancery, 'If anybody were to take a fancy to a corner of my estate, I would rather, provided always that nobody knew it, let him have it than go to law for it.'

"But to go on with my own affairs.

"A little while after my interview with Lord Oldborough, his lordship, to my surprise—for I thought his offer to assist me in my profession, if ever it should lie in his line, was a mere courtier's promise—sent his attorney to me, with a brief in a cause of Colonel Hauton's. The colonel has gone to law (most ungrateful as he is) with his uncle, who was his guardian, and who managed all his affairs for years. I need not explain to you the merits of the suit, or the demerits of the plaintiff. It is enough to tell you that I was all-glorious, with the hope of *making a good point* which had escaped the other counsel employed on our side; but the senior counsel never acknowledged the assistance he had received from me—obtained a nonsuit against the colonel, and had all the honour and triumph of the day. Some few gentlemen of the bar knew the truth, and they were indignant. I hear that my senior, whose name I will never tell you, lest you should hate it, has got into great practice by the gaining of this suit. Be that as it may, I would not change places and feelings with him at this moment.

'Grant me an honest fame, or grant me none.

"Mr. Grose, Lord Oldborough's solicitor, a rich rogue and very saucy, was obliged to employ me, because his client ordered it, and Lord Oldborough is not a man to be disobeyed, either in private or public affairs: but the attorney was obviously vexed and scandalized by his lordship's employing me, a young barrister, of whom nobody had ever heard, and who was not recommended by him, or under the protection even of any solicitor of eminence. Mr. Grose knew well how the suit was gained, but he never mentioned it to Lord Oldborough; on the contrary, he gave all the credit to my *senior*. This dry story of a *point* at law is the most interesting thing I have to tell you about myself. I have seen nothing, heard nothing, know nothing, but of law—and I begin to feel it difficult to write, speak, or think, in any but professional language. Tell my father that I shall soon come to talking law Latin and law French.

"I know no more of what is going on in this great metropolis than if I were at Tobolski. Buckhurst Falconer used to be my newspaper, but since he has given

up all hopes of Caroline, he seldom comes near me. I have lost in him my fashionable Daily Advertiser, my Belle Assemblée, and Tête-à-tête Magazine.

"Last Sunday I went to his fashionable chapel, to hear him preach: he is much admired, but I don't like his manner or his sermons—too theatrical and affected—too rhetorical and antithetical, evidently more suited to display the talents of the preacher than to do honour to God or good to man. He told me, that if he could preach himself into a deanery, he should think he had preached to some purpose; and could die with a safe conscience, as he should think he had not laboured in vain in his vocation. Of all men, I think a dissipated clergyman is the most contemptible. How much Commissioner Falconer has to answer for, who forced him, or who lured him, knowing how unfit he was for it, into the church! The commissioner frets because the price of iniquity has not yet been received—the living of Chipping-Friars is not yet Buckhurst's. The poor paralytic incumbent, for whose death he is praying daily, is still living; and, as Buckhurst says, may shake on many a long year. How Buckhurst lives in the mean time at the rate he does I cannot tell you—that art of living in style upon nothing is an art which I see practised by numbers, but which is still a mystery to me. However, the Falconers seem in great favour at present; the commissioner hopes Lord Oldborough may do something for Buckhurst. Last Sunday, when I went to hear him preach, I saw the whole family of the Falconers, in grandeur, in the Duke of Greenwich's seat. The Marchioness of Twickenham was there, and looked beautiful, but, as I thought, unhappy. After the sermon, I heard Lady Somebody, who was in the next seat to me, whisper to a Lady Otherbody, just as she was rising after the blessing, 'My dear madam, did you hear the shocking report about the Marchioness of Twickenham?' then a very close and confidential whisper; then, loud enough for me to hear, 'But, I do suppose, as there are hopes of an heir, all will be hushed—for the present.'

"Just then the Duke of Greenwich and the marquis and marchioness came down the aisle, and as they passed, my scandal-mongers smiled, and courtesied, and were so delighted to see their dear marchioness! The

Miss Falconers, following in the wake of nobility, seemed too much charmed with themselves to see or know me—till Lord Oldborough, though listening to the duke, espied me, and did me the honour to bow; then the misses put up their glasses to see who I could be, and they also smiled, and courtesied, and were delighted to see me.

"It is well for us that we don't live on their smiles and courtesies. They went off in the Marchioness of Twickenham's superb equipage. I had a full view of her as she drew up the glass, and a more melancholy countenance than hers I have seldom seen. Lord Oldborough hoped my father was well—but never mentioned Godfrey. The marchioness does not know me, but she turned at the name of Percy, and I thought sighed. Now, Rosamond, I put that sigh in for you—make what you can of it, and of the half-heard mysterious whisper. I expect that you will have a romance in great forwardness before Monday, the 3d of next month, when I hope to see you all.

"No letters from Godfrey.—Erasmus has been so busy of late, he tells me, he has not had time to record for you all his doings. In one word, he is doing exceedingly well. His practice increases every day in the city, in spite of Dr. Frumpton. Adieu till Monday, the 3d—Happy Monday!—'Restraint that sweetens liberty.' My dear Rosamond, which do you think loves vacation-time most, a lawyer or a school-boy?

"I was interrupted just now by a letter from a certain farmer of the name of Grimwood, who has written to me, 'because I am a friend to justice, and my father's son,' &c., and has given me a long account of a quarrel he has with Dr. Leicester about the tithe of peaches—said Grimwood is so angry, that he can neither spell nor write intelligibly, and he swears that if it cost him a thousand guineas in gold, he will have the law of the doctor. I wish my father would be so kind as to send to Mr. Grimwood (he lives at Pegginton), and advise him to keep clear of Attorney Sharpe, and to keep cool, if possible, till Monday, the 3d, and then I will make up the quarrel, if I can. Observe, more is to be done on Monday, the 3d, than ever was done on any other Monday.

"Your affectionate brother,

"ALFRED PERCY.

"P.S.—I open my letter to tell you a delightful piece

of news—that Lord Oldborough has taken Temple for his private secretary, and will bring him in for the borough of ——. How his lordship found him out to be the author of that famous pamphlet, which bore Cunningham's name, I do not know. I know that I kept the secret, as in honour bound; but Lord Oldborough has the best ways and means of obtaining intelligence of any man in England. It is singular that he never said one word about the pamphlet to Temple, nor ever appeared to him to know that it was his writing. I cannot understand this."

To comprehend why Lord Oldborough had never mentioned the pamphlet to Mr. Temple, it was necessary to know more than Alfred had opportunities of discovering of this minister's character. His lordship did not choose to acknowledge to the world that he had been duped by Cunningham Falconer. Lord Oldborough would sooner repair an error than acknowledge it. Not that he was uncandid; but he considered candour as dangerous and impolitic in a public character.

Upon some occasion, soon after Mr. Temple came to be his lordship's secretary, Mr. Temple acknowledged to a gentleman, in Lord Oldborough's presence, some trifling official mistake he had made: Lord Oldborough, as soon as the gentleman was gone, said to his secretary, "Sir, if you make a mistake, repair it—that is sufficient. Sir, you are young in political life—you don't know, I see, that candour hurts a political character in the opinion of fools—that is, of the greater part of mankind. Candour may be advantageous to a moral writer, or to a private gentleman, but not to a minister of state. A statesman, if he would govern public opinion, must establish a belief in his infallibility."

Upon this principle Lord Oldborough abided, not only by his own measures, but by his own instruments—right or wrong, he was known to support those whom he had once employed or patronised. Lucky this for the Falconer family!

LETTER FROM ALFRED TO ERASMUS.

"My dear Doctor,

"How I pity you, who have no vacations. Please, when next you sum up the advantages and disadvan-

tages of the professions of law and medicine, to set down *vacations* to the credit side of the law. You who work for life and death can have no pause, no respite; while I from time to time may, happily, leave all the property, real and personal, of my fellow-creatures, to its lawful or unlawful owners. Now, for six good weeks to come, I may hang sorrow and cast away care, and forget the sound and smell of parchments, and the din of the courts.

"Here I am, a happy prisoner at large, in this nutshell of a house at the Hills, which you have never seen since it has become the family mansion. I am now in the actual tenure and occupation of the little room, commonly called Rosamond's room, bounded on the N. E. W. and S. by blank ———[N.B. a very dangerous practice of leaving blanks for your boundaries in your leases, as an eminent attorney told me last week.] Said room containing in the whole 14 square feet 4½ square inches, superficial measure, be the same more or less. I don't know how my father and mother, and sisters, who all their lives were used to range in spacious apartments, can live so happily, cooped up as they now are; but their bodies, as well as minds, seem to have a contractile power, which adapts them to their present confined circumstances. Procrustes, though he was a mighty tyrant, could fit only the body to the bed. I found all at home as cheerful and contented as in the days when we lived magnificently at Percy-hall. I have not seen the Hungerfords yet; Colonel H. is, I hear, attached to Lady Elizabeth Pembroke. I know very little of her, but Caroline assures me she is an amiable, sensible woman, well suited to him, and to all his family. I need not, however, expatiate on this subject, for Caroline says that she wrote you a long letter, the day after she returned from Hungerford Castle.

"I must tell you what has happened to me since I came to the country. Do you remember my receiving a very angry, very ill-spelled letter, from a certain farmer Grimwood of Pegginton, who swore, that if it cost him a thousand guineas in gold he would have the law of *the doctor*—viz. Dr. Leicester—about a tithe of peaches? My father, at my request, was so good as to send for said Grimwood, and to prevent him from having recourse in his ire to Attorney Sharpe. With prodigious difficulty the angry farmer was restrained

till my arrival; when I came home, I found him waiting for me, and literally foaming at the mouth with the furious desire for law. I flatter myself, I did listen to his story with a patience for which Job might have been admired. I was well aware that till he had exhausted himself, and was practically convinced that he had nothing more to say, he would be incapable of listening to me, or to the voice of the angel of peace. When at last absolute fatigue of reiteration had reduced him to silence, when he had held me by the button till he was persuaded he had made me fully master of his case, I prevailed upon him to let me hear what could be said on the opposite side of the question; and after some hours' cross-examination of six witnesses, repeaters, and reporters, and after an infinite confusion of *said I's, and said he's*, it was made clearly to appear that the whole quarrel originated in the mistake of a few words in a message which Dr. Leicester's agent had given to his son, a boy of seven years old, who had left it with a deaf gate-keeper of seventy-six, who repeated it to farmer Grimwood, at a moment when the farmer was overheated and over-tired, and consequently prone to *misunderstanding* and to anger. The most curious circumstance in the whole business is, that the word peaches had never been mentioned by Dr. Leicester's agent in the original message; and Dr. Leicester really did not know that Mr. Grimwood of Pegginton was possessed of a single peach. Grimwood, though uncommonly obstinate and slow, is a just man; and when I at last brought the facts with indisputable evidence home to his understanding, he acknowledged that he had been too hasty, rejoiced that he had not gone to law, begged the doctor and the doctor's agent's pardon, thanked me with his whole honest heart, and went home in perfect charity with all mankind. Mr. Sharpe, who soon heard of the amicable conclusion of this affair, laughs at me, and pronounces that I shall never make a lawyer, and that my friends need never flatter themselves with the notion of my rising at the bar.

"Yours truly,

"A. PERCY.

"My letter was forgotten yesterday, and I am glad of it. Blessings on farmer Grimwood of Pegginton! Little did I think that he and his quarrel about tithe

peaches would have such happy influence on my destiny. Blessings on farmer Grimwood of Pegginton! I repeat: he has been the cause of my seeing such a—of my receiving such a look of approbation—such a smile! She is niece to our good rector—come to spend a few days with him. Grimwood went to the vicarage to make up his quarrel with Dr. Leicester—I do not know what he said of me, but I find it has left a very favourable impression in the good doctor's mind. He came here yesterday, and brought with him his charming niece. My dear Erasmus, you know that I have often prayed that I might never fall in love *seriously*, till I had some reasonable prospect of being able to marry; but I begin to retract my prayer for indifference, and to be of opinion that the most prudent thing a professional man can do is to fall in love—to fall in love with such a woman as Sophia Leicester. What a new motive for exertion! Animated by delightful hope, perseverance, even in the most stupid drudgery, will be pleasure. Hope!—but I am far from hope—far at this instant from knowing distinctly what I hope—or wish—or mean. I will write again soon, and explain."

CHAPTER XX.

In several successive letters of Alfred to his brother, the progress of his attachment to Miss Leicester is described. Instead of paying a visit of a few days to her uncle, it appears that she staid at the vicarage during the whole of Alfred's vacation. Her mother died, and, contrary to the expectation of some of her admirers, Miss Leicester was left in possession of only a moderate fortune. She showed much dignity under these adverse circumstances, with a charming mixture of spirit and gentleness of disposition. The change in her expectations, which deprived her of some of her fashionable admirers, showed her the superior sincerity and steadiness of Alfred's sentiments. No promises were given on either side, but it appears that Alfred was permitted to live and labour upon hope. He re-

turned to London more eager than ever to pursue his profession.

We trust that our readers will be fully satisfied with this abridgment of the affair, and will be more inclined to sympathize with Alfred, and to wish well to his attachment, than if they had been fatigued with a volume of his love-letters, and with those endless repetitions of the same sentiments with which most lovers' letters abound.

Let us now go on to the affairs of Erasmus Percy.

Mr. Panton, provoked by his daughter's coldness towards Lord Roadster, had begun shrewdly to suspect that the lady must be in love with some other person. His young physician was the only man on whom he could fix his suspicions. Constance seemed to be on a more confidential footing with him than with any of the visiters who frequented his house; she had spoken of him in terms of high approbation, and had not contradicted her father when he had, purposely to try her, pronounced Dr. Percy to be the handsomest young fellow he knew. While these suspicions were secretly gaining strength in the father's mind, a circumstance occurred which confirmed them at once, and caused them to burst forth with uncontrolled violence of expression.

Dr. Percy was called in to prescribe for a sick lawyer, and from this lawyer's conversation, he learned that Lord Runnymede was a ruined man, and that his son Lord Roadster's extravagance had been the cause of his ruin. Erasmus determined to put Mr. Panton upon his guard—and thus, if possible, to prevent the amiable Constance from becoming a victim to her father's absurd ambition. With this view he went to Mr. Panton's. The old gentleman was gone to dine with his club. Mrs. Panton, in her elegant language, desired he would leave his business with her. When he had explained the purport of his visit, Mrs. Panton—after a variety of vulgar exclamations denoting surprise and horror, and after paying many compliments to her own sagacity, all which appeared incompatible with her astonishment—expressed much gratitude to Erasmus, mixed with suppressed satisfaction, and significant nods, which he could not quite comprehend. Her gratitude was interrupted and the whole train of her ideas changed

by the entrance of a milliner with new caps and artificial flowers. She however retained sufficient recollection of what had passed, to call after Erasmus, when he had taken his leave, and to insist upon his coming to her party that evening. This he declined. Then she said he *must* dine with her next day, for let him be ever so busy, he must dine somewhere, and as good dine with somebody as with nobody; in short, she would take no denial. The next day Erasmus was received with ungracious oddity of manner by old Panton, the only person in the drawing-room when he arrived. Erasmus was so much struck with the gloom of his countenance, that he asked whether Mr. Panton felt himself ill. Panton bared his wrist, and held out his hand to Erasmus to feel his pulse; then withdrawing his hand, he exclaimed, "Nonsense! I'm as well as any man in England. Pray now, Doctor Percy, why don't you get a wig?" "Why should I, sir, when I have hair?" said Erasmus, laughing. "Pshaw! doctor, what signifies laughing when I am serious! Why sir, in my youth every decent physician wore a wig, and I have no notion of a good physician without a wig—particularly a young one. Sir, many people have a great objection to a young physician, for many reasons. And take my advice in time, Doctor Percy—a wig, a proper wig, not one of your modern natural scratches, but a decent powdered doctor's bob, would make you look ten years older at one slap, and, trust me, you'd get into practice fast enough then, and be sent for by many a sober family that would never think of letting you within their doors without the wig; for, sir, you are too young and too handsome for a physician—Hey! what say you to the wig?" concluded Panton, in a tone of such serious yet comical impatience, that Erasmus found it difficult to restrain a smile, while he answered that he really did not think his charms were so dangerous that it was necessary to disguise them by a wig; that as to his youth, it was an objection which every day would tend to lessen; and that he trusted he might obtain the credit of being a good physician, if he could cure people of their diseases; and they would feel it to be a matter of indifference whether they were restored to health by a doctor in a wig or without one.

"Indifference!" cried Panton, starting upright in his chair with passion. "I don't know what you call a matter of indifference, sir; I can tell you it's no matter

of indifference to me—if you mean me; for, say that with God's mercy you carried me through—what then, if you are doing your best to break my heart after all—"

Mr. Panton stopped short, for at this instant Constance came into the room—and her father's look of angry suspicion, and her blush, immediately explained to Erasmus what had the moment before appeared to him unintelligible. He felt provoked with himself for colouring in his turn, and being embarrassed without any reason, but he recovered his presence of mind directly, when Constance, with a dignified ingenuous modesty of manner, advanced towards him, notwithstanding her father's forbidding look, and with a sweet, yet firm voice, thanked him for his yesterday's friendly visit to her mother.

"I wonder you an't ashamed of yourself, *girl*!" cried old Panton, choking with passion.

"And I'm sure I wonder you an't ashamed of yourself, Mr. Panton, if you come to that," cried Mrs. Panton, "exposing of your family affairs this way by your unseasonable passions, when one has asked people to dinner too."

"Dinner or no dinner," cried old Panton, and he must have been strangely transported beyond himself when he made that exclamation, "dinner or no dinner, Mrs. Panton, I will speak my mind, and be master in my own house! So, Doctor Percy, if you please, we'll leave the ladies, and talk over our matters our own way, in my own room here within."

Dr. Percy willingly acceded to this proposal. Old Panton waddled as fast as he could, to show the way through the antechamber, while Mrs. Panton called after him, "Don't expose yourself no more than you can help, my dear!" and as Erasmus passed her, she whispered, "Never mind him, doctor—stand by yourself—I'll stand by you, and *we*'ll stand by you—won't we, Constance? see her colour!"—"We have reason to be grateful to Dr. Percy," said Constance, gravely, with an air of offended modesty; "and I hope," added she, with softened sweetness of tone, as she looked at him, and saw his feelings in his countenance, "I hope Doctor Percy is assured of my gratitude, and of my perfect esteem."

"Come! what the devil!" cried old Panton, "I thought you were close behind me."

"Now, doctor," cried he, as soon as he had fairly got Erasmus into his closet, and shut the door, "now, doctor, I suppose you see I am not a man to be imposed upon!"

"Nor, if you were, am I a man to impose upon you, sir," said Erasmus. "If I understand you rightly, Mr. Panton, you suspect me of some designs upon your daughter. I have none."

"And you won't have the assurance to deny that you are in love with her!"

"I am not is love with Miss Panton, sir: she has charms and virtues which might create the strongest attachment in the heart of any man of feeling and discernment who could permit himself to think of her; but I am not in a situation in which I could, with honour, seek to win her affections, and, fortunately for me, this reflection has probably preserved my heart from danger. If I felt any thing like love for your daughter, sir, you may be assured that I should not at this instant be in your house."

"A mighty fine speech, sir! and well delivered, for aught I know. You are a scholar, and can speak sentences; but that won't impose on me, a plain man that has eyes. Why—tell me!—didn't I see you within these two minutes blushing up to the eyes, both of you, at one another! Don't I know when I see men and women in love—tell me! Mrs. Panton—fudge!—And did not I see behind my back, just now, the women conjuring with you! And aren't you colouring over head and ears with conscience this very instant!—Tell me!"

Erasmus in vain asserted his own and the young lady's innocence, and maintained that blushing was no proof of guilt—he even adverted to the possibility of a man's blushing for others instead of himself.

"Blush for me as much as you please, if it's me you allude to," cried the coarse father; "but when my daughter's at stake, I make no bones of speaking plain, and cutting the matter short in the beginning—for we all know what love is when it comes to a head. Marrow-bones! don't I know that there must be some reason why that headstrong girl won't think of my Lord Runnymede's son and heir, and such a looking youth, title and all, as my Lord Roadster! And you are the cause, sir; and I thank you for opening my eyes to

it, as you did by your information to Mrs. Panton yesterday, in my absence."

Erasmus protested, with such an air of truth as would have convinced any person capable of being convinced, that in giving that information, he had been actuated solely by a desire to save Miss Panton from a ruinous match, by honest regard for her and all her family.

"Ruinous!—You are wrong, sir—I know better—I know best—I saw my Lord Runnymede himself this very morning—a little temporary want of cash only from the estate's being tied up, as they sometimes tie estates, which all noble families are subject to—Tell me! don't I know the bottom of these things? for though I haven't been used to land, I know all about it. And at worst, my Lord Roadster, my son-in-law that is to be, is not chargeable with a penny of his father's debts. So your informant is wrong, sir, every way, and no lawyer, sir, for I have an attorney at my back—and your information's all wrong, and you had no need to interfere."

Erasmus felt and acknowledged the imprudence of his interference, but hoped it might be forgiven in favour of the motive—and he looked so honestly glad to hear that his information was all wrong, that old Panton at the moment believed in his integrity, and said, stretching out his hand towards him, "Well, well, no harm done—then it's all as it should be, and we may ring for dinner. But," recurring again to his favourite idea, "you'll get the wig, doctor?"

"Excuse me," said Erasmus, laughing, "your confidence in me cannot depend upon a wig."

"It can, sir, and it does," cried Panton, turning again, with all his anger revived. "Excuse you! No, sir, I won't; for the wig's my test, and I told Mrs. Panton so last night—the wig's my test of your uprightness in this matter, sir; and I fairly tell you, that if you refuse this, all the words you can string don't signify a button with me."

"And by what right, sir, do you speak to me in this manner?" cried Erasmus, proudly, for he lost all sense of the ludicrous in indignation at the insolent doubt of his integrity, which, after all the assurances he had given, these last words from Mr. Panton implied: "By what right, sir, do you speak to me in this manner? And what reason can you have to expect that I should sub-

mit to any tests to convince you of the truth of my assertions?"

"Right! Reason!" cried Panton. "Why, doctor, don't you know that I'm your patron?"

"My patron!" repeated Erasmus, in a tone which would have expressed much to the mind of any man of sense or feeling, but which conveyed no idea to the gross apprehension of old Panton except that Dr. Percy was ignorant of the fact.

"Your patron—yes, doctor—why, don't you know that ever since you set me upon my legs I have been going up and down the city puffing—that is, I mean, recommending you to all my friends? and you see you're of consequence—getting into fine practice for so young a man. And it stands to reason that when one takes a young man by the hand, one has a right to expect one's advice should be followed; and as to the wig, I don't make it a test—you've an objection to a test—but as I've mentioned it to Mrs. Panton, I must make it a point, and you know I'm not a man to go back. And you'll consider that if you disoblige me, you can't expect that I should continue my friendship and protection and patronage, and all that."

"Be assured, sir, I expect nothing from you," said Erasmus, "and desire nothing: I have the happiness and honour to belong to a profession in which, if a man merits confidence, he will succeed, without requiring any man's patronage."—Much less the patronage of such a one as you! Erasmus would have said, but that he commanded his indignation, or perhaps it was extinguished by contempt.

A servant now came to announce that the company was arrived, and dinner was waiting. In very bad humour Mr. Panton, nevertheless, ate an excellent dinner, growling over every thing as he devoured it. Constance seemed much grieved by her father's unseasonable fit of rudeness and obstinacy; with sweetness of temper and filial duty she bore with his humour, and concealed it as far as she could from observation. Mrs. Panton was displeased with this, and once went so far as to whisper to Erasmus that her step-daughter wanted spirit sadly, but that he ought never to mind that, but to take a broad hint, and keep his ground. Erasmus, who, with great simplicity, and an upright character, had quick observation and tact, perceived pretty nearly what

was going on in the family. He saw that the step-mother, under an air of frank and coarse good-nature, was cunning and interested; that she wished to encourage the daughter to open war with the father, knowing that nothing could incense him so much as Constance's thinking of a poor physician instead of accepting of an earl's son; Mrs. Panton wished then to fan to a flame the spark which she was confident existed in his daughter's heart. Erasmus, who was not apt to fancy that ladies liked him, endeavoured to relieve Constance from the agonizing apprehension which he saw she felt of his being misled by her mother's hints: he appeared sometimes not to hear, and at other times not to understand, what Mrs. Panton whispered; and at last talked so loud across the table to Mr. Henry, about letters from Godfrey, and the officers of all the regiments in or out of England, that no other subject could be introduced, and no other voice could be heard. As soon as he decently could, after dinner, Dr. Percy took his leave, heartily glad to escape from his awkward situation, and from the patronage of Mr. Panton. Erasmus was mistaken, however, in supposing that Mr. Panton could do him no harm. It is true that he could not deny that Dr. Percy had restored him to health, and the opinion, which had spread in the city, of Dr. Percy's skill, was not, and could not, be diminished by Mr. Panton's railing against him; but when he hinted that the young physician had practised upon his daughter's heart, all the rich citizens who had daughters to watch began to consider him as a dangerous person, and resolved never to call him in, except in some desperate case. Mrs. Panton's gossiping confidences did more harm than her husband's loud complaints; and the very eagerness which poor Constance showed to vindicate Dr. Percy, and to declare the truth, served only to confirm the sagaciously nodding mothers and overwise fathers in their own opinions. Mr. Henry said and did what he could for Erasmus; but what could be done by a young man shut up all day in a counting-house? or who would listen to any thing that was said by a youth without station or name? Mr. Gresham unluckily was at this time at his country-seat. Poor Erasmus found his practice in the city decline as rapidly as it had risen, and he began a little to doubt the truth of that noble sentiment which he had so proudly expressed. He was comforted, how-

ever, by letters from his father, who strongly approved his conduct, and who maintained that truth would at last prevail, and that the prejudice which had been raised against him would, in time, be turned to his advantage.

It happened that, while old Panton, in his present ludicrous fit of obstinacy, was caballing against our young physician with all his might in the city, the remote consequences of his absurdities were operating in Dr. Percy's favour at the west end of the town. Our readers may recollect having heard of a footman whom Mr. Panton turned away for laughing at his perversity. Erasmus had at the time pleaded in the poor fellow's favour, and had, afterward, when the servant was out of place, in distress, and ill, humanely attended him, and cured a child of his, who had inflamed eyes. This man was now in the service of a rich and very fine lady, who lived in Grosvenor-square—Lady Spilsbury. Her ladyship had several sickly children—children rendered sickly by their mother's overweening and injudicious care. Alarmed successively by every fashionable medical terror of the day, she dosed her children with every specific which was publicly advertised or privately recommended. No creatures of their age had taken such quantities of Ching's lozenges, Godbold's elixir, or Dixon's anti-bilious pills. The consequence was, that the dangers, which had at first been imaginary, became real: these little victims of domestic medicine never had a day's health: they looked, and were, more dead than alive. Still the mother, in the midst of hourly alarms, was in admiration of her own medical skill, which she said had actually preserved, in spite of nature, children of such sickly constitutions. In consequence of this conviction, she redoubled her vigilance, and the most trivial accident was magnified into a symptom of the greatest importance.

It happened on the day when the eldest Miss Spilsbury had miraculously attained her seventh year, a slight inflammation was discerned in her right eye, which was attributed by her mother to her having neglected the preceding day to bathe it in elder-flower water; by her governess, to her having sat up the preceding night to supper; by her maid, to her having been found peeping through a windy keyhole; and by the young lady her-

self, to her having been kept for two hours poring over her French lesson.

Whatever might have been the original cause, the inflammation evidently increased, either in consequence or in spite of the innumerable remedies applied internally and externally—the eye grew redder and redder, and as red as blood, the nose inflamed, and the mother, in great alarm for the beauty as well as health of her child, sent for Sir Amyas Courtney. He had already won Lady Spilsbury's heart by recommending to her the *honan tcha*, or Tartar tea, which enables the Tartars to digest raw flesh, and tinges water of a red colour.

Sir Amyas pronounced that the young lady had hereditary nerves, besought Lady Spilsbury to compose herself, assured her the inflammation was purely symptomatic, and as soon as he could subdue the continual nervous inclination to shrivel up the nose, which he trusted he could in time master, all would go well. But Sir Amyas attended every day for a month, yet never got the mastery of this nervous inclination. Lady Spilsbury then was persuaded *it could not be nerves, it must be scrofula;* and she called in Dr. Frumpton, *the man for scrofula.* He of course confirmed her ladyship in her opinion; for a week d—d nerves and Sir Amyas; threw in desperate doses of calomel for another month, reduced the poor child to what the maid called an *attomy*, and still the inflammation increased. Lady Spilsbury desired a consultation of physicians, but Dr. Frumpton would not consult with Sir Amyas, nor would Sir Amyas consult with Dr. Frumpton. Lady Spilsbury began to dread that the sight of the eye would be injured, and this idea terrified the mother almost out of her senses. In the suspension of authority which terror produces in a family, the lady's maid usually usurps considerable power.

Now her ladyship's maid had been offended by Dr. Frumpton's calling her *my good girl*, and by Sir Amyas Courtney's having objected to a green silk bandage, which she had recommended; so that she could not *abide* either of the gentlemen, and she was confident the young lady would never get well while they had the management of affairs: she had heard—but she did not mention from whom, she was too diplomatic to give up her authority—she had heard of a young physician, a Dr. Percy, who had performed wonderful great cures

in the city, and had in particular cured a young *lady* who had an inflamed eye, just for all the world like Miss Spilsbury's. In this last assertion there was, perhaps, some little exaggeration; but it produced a salutary effect upon Lady Spilsbury's imagination: the footman was immediately despatched for Dr. Percy, and ordered to make all possible haste. Thus, by one of those petty underplots of life which, often unknown to us, are continually going on, our young physician was brought into a situation where he had an opportunity of showing his abilities. These favourable accidents happen to many men who are not able to make use of them, and thus the general complaint is preferred of want of good fortune, or of opportunity for talents to distinguish themselves.

Upon Dr. Percy's arrival at Lady Spilsbury's he immediately perceived that parties ran high, and that the partisans were all eager to know whether he would pronounce the young lady's case to be nervous or scrofulous. He was assailed by a multitude of female voices, and requested particularly to attend to innumerable contradictory symptoms, before he was permitted even to see his patient. He attended carefully to whatever facts he could obtain, pure from opinion and misrepresentation. The young lady was in a darkened room—he begged to have a little more light admitted, though she was in such pain that she could scarcely endure it. Our young physician had the great advantage of possessing the use of his senses and understanding, unbiased by medical theories, or by the authority of great names: he was not always trying to force symptoms to agree with previous descriptions, but he was actually able to see, hear, and judge of them as they really appeared. There was a small protuberance on the left side of the nose, which, on his pressing it, gave great pain to the child.

"Dear me! miss, you know," said the maid, "it is not in your nose you feel the great pain—you know you told Sir Amyas Courtney t'other day—that is, Sir Amyas Courtney told you—"

Dr. Percy insisted that the child should be permitted to speak for herself; and, relieved from the apprehension of not saying the thing that she was expected to say, she described her present and past feelings. She said, "that the pain seemed lately to have *changed from where*

it was before—that it had changed ever since Dr. Frumpton's opening his snuff-box near her had made her sneeze." This sneeze was thought by all but Dr. Percy to be a circumstance too trival to be worth mentioning; but on this hint he determined to repeat the experiment. He had often thought that many of the pains which are supposed to be symptoms of certain diseases, many disorders which baffle the skill of medicine, originate in accidents, by which extraneous substances are taken or forced into different parts of the body. He ordered some cephalic snuff to be administered to the patient. All present looked with contempt at the physician who proposed such a simple remedy. But soon after the child had sneezed violently and repeatedly, Dr. Percy saw a little bit of green silk appear, which was drawn from the nostril, to the patient's great and immediate relief. Her brothers and sisters then recollected having seen her, two months before, stuffing up her nose a bit of green riband, which she said she liked because it smelt of some perfume. The cause of the inflammation removed, it soon subsided; the eye and nose recovered their natural size and colour, and everybody said "Who would have thought it!" all but Dr. Frumpton and Sir Amyas Courtney, who, in the face of demonstration, maintained each his own opinion; declaring that the green riband had nothing to do with the business. The sudden recovery of the child, Sir Amyas said, proved to him in the most satisfactory manner, that the disease was, as he at first pronounced —nervous. Dr. Frumpton swore that scrofula would soon break out again in another shape; and, denouncing vengeance against generations yet unborn, he left Lady Spilsbury's children to take the consequence of trusting to a youngster, whose impertinent interference he could never forget or forgive. In spite of all that the two angry and unsuccessful physicians could say, the recovery of the child's eye redounded much to Dr. Percy's honour, and introduced him to the notice of several men of science and celebrity, who frequented Lady Spilsbury's excellent dinners. Even the intemperance of Dr. Frumpton's anger was of service; for in consequence of his furious assertions, inquiry was made into the circumstances, and the friends of Erasmus had then an opportunity of producing in his defence the Irish porter. His cause could not be in better hands.

With that warmth and eloquence of gratitude characteristic of his country, the poor fellow told his story so as to touch every heart. Among others it particularly affected an officer just returned from our armies on the Continent: and by him it was the next day repeated at the table of a celebrated general, when the conversation turned upon the conduct of certain army surgeons. Lord Oldborough happened to be one of the company; the name of Percy struck his ear; the moment Erasmus was thus brought to his recollection, he attended particularly to what the officer was saying; and, after hearing two circumstances, which were so marked with humanity and good sense, his lordship determined to give what assistance he could to the rising credit of the son of his old friend, by calling him in for Lady Oldborough, who was in a declining state of health. But Sir Amyas Courtney, who had long attended her ladyship, endeavoured, with all the address of hatred, to prejudice her against his young rival, and to prevent her complying with her lord's request. Depending on her habitual belief that he was essential to her existence, Sir Amyas went so far as to declare that if Dr. Percy should be sent for, he must discontinue his visits. Lord Oldborough, however, whom the appearance of opposition to his will always confirmed in his purpose, cut short the matter by a few peremptory words.

Sir Amyas, the soft silken Sir Amyas, could not for an instant stand before the terror of Lord Oldborough's eye: the moment he was told that he was at perfect liberty to discontinue his visits, his regard—his attachment—his devotion for Lady Oldborough, prevented the possibility of abandoning her ladyship; he was willing to sacrifice his private feelings, perhaps his private prejudices, his judgment, in short any thing, every thing, sooner than disoblige Lord Oldborough, or any of his family. Lord Oldborough, satisfied with the submission, scarcely staid to hear the end of the speech, but rang the bell, ordered that Dr. Percy should be sent for, and went to attend a cabinet council.

Lady Oldborough received him as it might be supposed that a very sickly, very much prejudiced, very proud lady of quality would receive a physician without a name, who was forced upon her in opposition to her long habits of reliance on her courtly favourite. Her present disease, as Dr. Percy believed, was water upon

her chest, and there was some chance of saving her, by the remedies which have been found successful in a first attack of that complaint; but Sir Amyas had pronounced that her ladyship's disorder was merely nervous spasms, consequent upon a bilious attack, and he could not, or would not, recede from his opinion: his prescriptions, to which her ladyship devoutly adhered to the last, were all directed against bile and nerves. She would not hear of water on the chest, or take any of the remedies proposed by Dr. Percy. Lady Oldborough died ten days after he was called in. Those who knew nothing of the matter, that is, above nine-tenths of all who talked about it, affirmed that poor Lady Oldborough's death was occasioned by her following the rash prescriptions of a young physician, who had been forced upon her by Lord Oldborough; and who, unacquainted with her ladyship's constitution, had mistaken the nature of her complaint. All her ladyship's female relations joined in this clamour, for they were most of them friends or partisans of Sir Amyas Courtney. The rank and conspicuous situation of Lord Oldborough interested vast numbers in the discussion, which was carried on in every fashionable circle the day after her ladyship's decease.

Dr. Percy took a decided step in this emergency. He went to the minister, to whom no one, friend or enemy, had ventured to give the slightest hint of the reports in circulation. Dr. Percy plainly stated the facts, represented that his character and the fate of his whole life were at stake, and besought his lordship to have the truth examined into by eminent and impartial physicians. Erasmus was aware of all he hazarded in making this request—aware that he must hurt Lord Oldborough's feelings—that he must irritate him by bringing to his view at once, and in this critical moment, a number of family cabals, of which he was ignorant—aware that Lord Oldborough was oppressed with business, public and private; and that, above all things, he was impatient of any intrusion upon his hours of privacy. But all these subordinate considerations vanished before Lord Oldborough's magnanimity. Without saying one word, he sat down and wrote an order, that proper means should be taken to ascertain the disease of which Lady Oldborough died.

The report made, in consequence of this order, by

the surgeons, confirmed Dr. Percy's opinion that her ladyship's disease was water on the chest—and Lord Oldborough took effectual means to give the truth publicity.

"You need not thank me, Dr. Percy—you have a right to expect justice, more you will never want. My assistance might, it seems, have been injurious, but can never be necessary to your reputation."

These few words—much from Lord Oldborough—and which he took care to say when they could be heard by numbers, were quickly circulated. The physicians and surgeons who had given in their report were zealous in maintaining the truth; medical and political parties were interested in the affair: the name of Dr. Percy was joined with the first names in the medical world and repeated by the first people in the great world; so that with surprising celerity he became known and fashionable. And thus the very circumstance that threatened his ruin, was, by his civil courage and decided judgment, converted into the means of his rising into eminence.

Late one night, after a busy and fatiguing day, just as Erasmus had got into bed, and was settling himself comfortably to sleep, he heard a loud knock at the door.

"Mr. Henry, sir, from Mr. Panton's in the city, wishes to speak with you."

"Show him in. So old Panton, I suppose—some indigestion has brought him to reason?"

"Oh! no such thing," interrupted Mr. Henry—"I would not have disturbed you at this time of night for any such trifle; but our excellent friend Mr. Gresham—"

"What of him?" cried Erasmus, starting up in bed.

"Is ill—but whether dangerously or not, I cannot tell you. An express from his house in the country has just arrived; I heard the letter read, but could not get it to bring to you. It was written to old Panton from Mr. Gresham's housekeeper, without her master's knowledge, as he has no opinion of physicians, she said, except of a young Dr. Percy, and did not like to send for him for such a trifle as a sore throat, lest it should hurt his practice to leave town at this season."

Erasmus staid to hear no more, but ordered horses instantly, set out, and travelled with all possible expedition. He had reason to rejoice that he had not made

a moment's delay. He found Mr. Gresham actually suffocating from a quinsy. A surgeon had been sent for from the next town, but was not at home. Erasmus, the instant he saw Mr. Gresham, perceiving the danger, without saying one syllable, sprang to the bed, lanced the throat, and saved the life of his valuable friend. The surgeon, who came the next day, said that Dr Percy ought to have waited for his arrival, and that a physician might be severely blamed for performing a surgical operation—that it was a very indelicate thing.

But Mr. Gresham, who had fallen into a comfortable sleep, did not hear him, nor did Dr. Percy, who was writing the following letter to his father:—

* * * * * * * * * * *

* * * * "You will sympathize with me, my dear father, and all my friends at home will sympathize in the joy I feel at seeing this excellent man, this kind friend, recovering under my care. These are some of the happy moments which, in my profession, repay us for years of toil, disappointment, and sufferings—yes, sufferings, for we must suffer with those that suffer, we must daily and hourly behold every form of pain, acute or lingering; numbers, every year of our lives, we must see perish, the victims of incurable disease. We are doomed to hear the groans of the dying, and the lamentations, sometimes the reproaches, of surviving friends; often and often must the candid and humane physician deplore the insufficiency of his art. But there are *successful, gloriously* successful moments, which reward us for all the painful duties, all the unavailing regrets of our profession.

"This day I shall recall to my mind whenever my spirits sink or whenever my fortitude begins to fail. I wish you could see the gratitude and joy in the looks of all Mr. Gresham's servants. His death would have been a public loss, for the beneficent use he makes of his princely fortune has rendered numbers dependent on him for the comforts of life. He lives here in a palace, and every thing he has done, whether in building or planting, in encouraging the useful or the fine arts, has been done with a judicious and magnificent spirit. Surely this man ought to be happy in his own reflections, and yet he does not seem to me as happy as he

deserves to be. I shall stay here till I see him out of all danger of relapse. He has just awakened—Adieu for the present."

In continuation of this letter the following was written the next day.

"All danger is over—my friend is convalescent, and I shall return to town to-morrow. But would you think, my dear father, that the real cause of Mr. Gresham's being unhappy is patronage? By accident I made use of that word in speaking of old Panton's quarrel with me, and he cursed the word the moment I pronounced it: 'Yes,' he exclaimed, 'it is twice accursed—once in the giving, and once in the receiving.' Then he began, in a most feeling manner, to describe the evils attendant upon being a patron. He has done his utmost to relieve and encourage genius in distress; but among all the poets, painters, artists, and men of letters whom in various ways he has obliged, he has scarcely been able to satisfy the vanity or the expectations of any. Some have passed from excessive adulation to gross abuse of him—many more torment him continually with their complaints and invectives against each other; and, instead of having done good by his generosity, he finds that, in a variety of instances, of which he detailed the circumstances, he has done much mischief, and, as he says, infinite injury to his own peace of mind—for he has burdened himself with the care of a number of people, who cannot be made happy. He has to deal with men but partially cultivated; with *talents*, unaccompanied by reason, justice, or liberality of sentiment. With great feeling himself, he suffers acutely from all their jealousies and quarrels, and from the near and perpetual view of the *littleness* by which artists too often degrade themselves. Another man in Mr. Gresham's situation would become a misanthropist, and would comfort himself by railing against the ingratitude of mankind; but this would not comfort Mr. Gresham. He loves his fellow-creatures, and sees their faults in sorrow rather than in anger. I have known him, and intimately, for a considerable time, and yet I never heard him speak on this subject but once before, when the painter, whom I used to call the irritable genius, had caricatured him in return for all his kindness.

"Though it is not easy to change the habits or to

alter the views and objects of a man, like Mr. Gresham, past the meridian of life, yet I cannot help flattering myself that this might be effected. If he would, by one bold effort, shake off these dependants, the evening of his days might yet be serene and happy. He wants friends, not *protégées*. I have advised him, as soon as his strength will permit, to take a little tour, which will bring him into your part of the country. He wishes much to become acquainted with all our family, and I have given him a note of introduction. You, my dear father, can say to him more than I could with propriety.

"Mr. Gresham knows how to accept as well as to give. He allows me to have the pleasure of proving to him, that where my friends are concerned, I am above pecuniary considerations. My love to my dear mother, Rosamond, and Caroline,

"Your affectionate son,

"E. Percy."

Though Mr. Gresham would not hurt the feelings of his young friend and physician, by pressing upon him at the moment any remuneration, or by entering into any calculation of the loss he would sustain by his absence from London at this critical season, he took his own methods of justly recompensing Dr. Percy. Erasmus found at his door, some time after his return to town, a plain but excellent chariot and horses, with a note from Mr. Gresham, written in such terms as precluded the possibility of refusing the offer.

The celebrated London physician who said that he was not paid for three weeks' attendance in the country, by a draft of two thousand pounds, and who, when the pen was put into his own hands, wrote four in the place of two, would smile in scorn at the generosity of Mr. Gresham and the disinterestedness of Dr. Percy.

END OF VOL. XIV.

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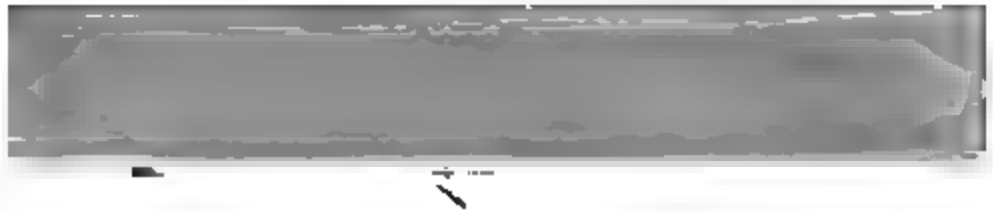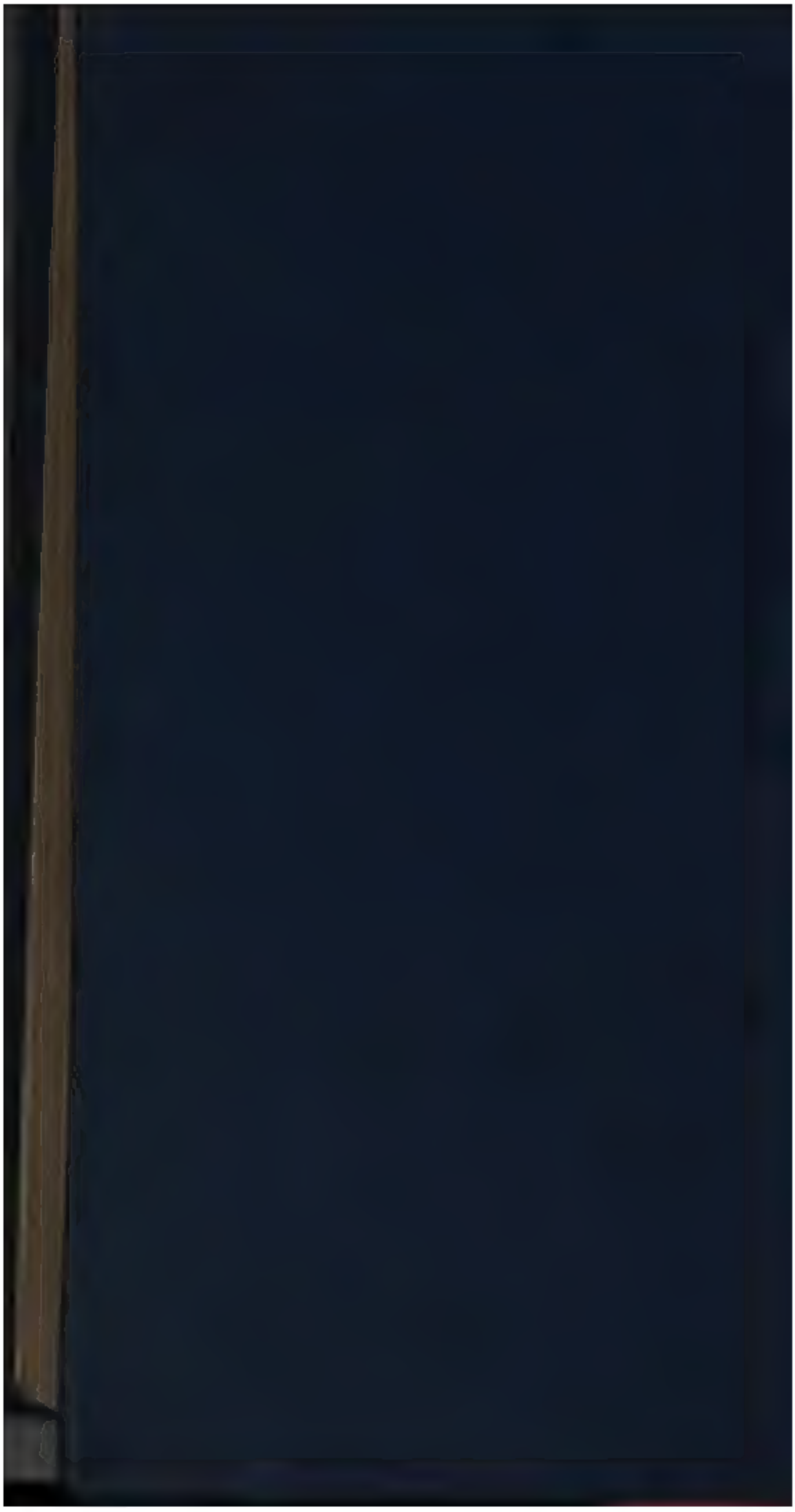
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